THE CHRISTOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Works	Works of President Edwards. 4 vols. Reprint of Worcester edition. New York: Jonathan Leavitt and John F. Trow, 1843-1844.
Grosart.	Selections from the Unpublished Writings of Jonathan Edwards, of America. Edited by Alexander B. Grosart. Edinburgh: Ballantyne & Co., 1865.
Howard	"The Mind" of Jonathan Edwards, a Reconstructed Text. Edited by Leon Howard. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.
Townsend	The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards from His Private Notebooks. Edited by Harvey G. Townsend. Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955.
Yale MSS	"Miscellanies." Yale Collection. Yale Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Transcriptions used by permission.
Schaff	The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes. Edited by Philip Schaff. 3 vols. New York: Harper and Bros., 1878.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. A NEW FOUNDATION	20
Shifting Sand	
Solid Rock	
The Consequences	
II. MADE UNTO US WISDOM	47
An Historical Note	
Like Us in All Things	
Except Sin	
The Thesis Stated	
III. MADE UNTO US RIGHTEOUSNESS	93
Man and God	
Christ and God	
Christ and Man: the Extra Nos	
Christ and Man: the Pro Nobis	
Conclusion	
IV. MADE UNTO US SANCTIFICATION	185
The Real and the Legal	
The Action the Mind Has in It: Knowledge	
The Action God Has in It: Grace	
The Relation between Man and God: Union	
The Relation between Man and the World: Virtue	
The Apparent Christ and the Visible Saint	

Page

V. MADE UNTO US REDEMPTION 267

Redemption as History
The Typology of History
The Future as History
Radical This-Worldliness
Conclusion

BIBLIOGRAPHY 309

For Carl Michalson, 1915-1965,
whose life made brilliantly visible
the grace of God,
even unto death.

INTRODUCTION

While there is nearly universal agreement on the proposition that Jesus Christ stands at the center of the life and thought of the Christian faith, there is a disquieting cacophony of views as to where this center is to be located and how it is to be conceived. Shall we have conceived this center properly if we understand the church to be the historical extension of Jesus Christ, both of his authority and of his physical presence? Or shall we deny that Christ can be known or be present through any other means than his word? Should we have come closer to Jesus Christ had we employed the architectonic categories of person, states, and work, or if instead we had asked what it is that "comes to expression in Jesus"?

It would be a mistake to assume that the richly varied conformations in the church's approach to Jesus Christ are either arbitrarily or fortuitously constructed. It should rather be seen that they are shaped by such factors as the taste for metaphysics among a particular age or school of theology, or by the status of the church's conversation with the world, or even by the attention or lack of it given to other doctrinal fields. For this reason, we are allowed to think that an examination of the christology of an important theologian will give us an unusually

comprehensive view of his theology as a whole and its relation both to his age and to our own.

But we are immediately faced with the problem of delineating the boundaries of our discussion. According to what traditional structure shall we organize Edwards' thought into a coherent christology, or judge whether it be coherent, or whether it be significant? It is well known that much of Edwards' theology was hammered out in the smithies of Reformed orthodoxy and the Puritan tradition. But it is instructive to note that while he had read such orthodox stalwarts as Turretin and van Mastricht he never chose to enter into the interstices of the elaborate christological arguments that appear in their pages. As we shall be repeatedly reminded in the course of this study there is in Edwards' works a marked absence of concern with even the most frequent categories of orthodox christology. The communicatio idiomatum, for example, is discussed nowhere in his writings to my knowledge with the exception of one entry in the unpublished Miscellanies, but even there most of that brief excursus consists in a quote from Rawlin's work on justification.[1] His own view, if he had one, is not recorded. And even so ubiquitous a doctrine as the three-fold mediatorial office of Christ receives scant reference.

If viewing Edwards over against the orthodox background will not assist us, what appears when we see him

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[1]Yale MSS, No. 1219.

over against his more properly Puritan heritage? It is Nuttall's suggestion that since such emphasis was given to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, a Puritan christology as such never did develop.[2] This is probably exaggerated, although it is true that the Puritan divines did not give much of their attention to the technicalities of the christological doctrines. William Ames, in one of the books that was never far from Edwards' hand, presents a brief but orderly discussion of the personal union, the communication of properties, the three-fold office, and the two states.[3] But there is nothing interesting in these pages except as they exhibit a faithful and tidy restatement of the Westminster doctrine. The same judgment might be made of John Owen's christology, even though he was much more verbal on the subject than Ames.[4] But Edwards simply does not evidence a concern to work out an understanding of Christ that holds faithfully to the Westminster doctrine. It is not as though herwere throwing it over; it is rather that he has laid a new foundation for the construction of theological doctrine, as we shall presently discover.

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[2]The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), pp. 144ff.

[3]The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne out of the Holy Scriptures and the Interpreters Thereof, and Brought into Method, trans. from the Latin (London: J. Rothwell, 1643), pp. 69ff.

[4]Cf., The Death of Death in the Death of Christ, (Philadelphia: Green and M'Laughlin, 1827); The Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, God and Man (New York: Robert Carter, 1839).

Without any promise, then, of finding in Edwards' immediate background a christological structure on which we could display his thought, and assuming it is generally agreed that the categories by which this study is to proceed are not already sprung full-grown from the loin of a timeless and universally applicable doctrine, it would therefore seem necessary to find a suitable text within the Edwards corpus that could give us the most adequate guide to organizing and interpreting the countless references to Christ that flow through the whole.

To fit our purpose such a text must not only give specific and comprehensive attention to Jesus Christ, but must also have within its horizon some indication of the way in which the whole of Edwards' thought would relate to Christ. In his letter to the Princeton trustees acknowledging their invitation to assume the duties of the president of the college, he projects what would seem to be the one work that would satisfy our requirements.

> I have on my mind and heart, (which I long ago began, not with any view to publication,) a great work, which I call a History of the Work of Redemption, a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of a history; considering the affair of Christian Theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ; which I suppose to be, of all others, the grand design of God, and the summum and ultimum of all the divine operations and decrees; particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme in their historical order.[5]

His death five months later held him from the completion of

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[5]Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson (eds.), Jonathan Edwards (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), p. 411.

this uncommonly ambitious project. We are left instead with that work which he said he "long ago began, not with any view to publication." This, doubtlessly, is a reference to a series of sermons he preached in Northampton in 1739. These sermons lay in manuscript form until 1773 when Jonathan Edwards, Jr. made them available for printing, considering them but "outlines" of that projected work and warning that "the reader cannot reasonably expect all that from them, which he might justly have expected, had they been written with such a view, and prepared by the author's own hand for the press."[6] It should be taken seriously that Edwards took this projected work to be of such importance and yet did not elect, in the nineteen years intervening between their delivery in Northampton and his death in Princeton, to release these sermons to the public. In his own estimation they probably remained, as his son suggested, merely an "outline," and may not therefore be taken as an adequate substitute for the unwritten volume.

But may we nonetheless use the sermons now published under the title, The History of the Work of Redemption, for our immediate task of delineating the boundaries of our subject matter? Outline or no, this is, in fact, the only single volume in the whole of Edwards' writing that deals directly with a major traditional christological theme. But its crude and hasty execution is not the only problem in our use of the book. There is a curious lacuna in the work when it is viewed as a whole. In the first

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[6]Works, I, 296.

sermon he explains that the work of redemption is carried on by God from the fall of man to the end of the world in two respects. The first concerns

> the application of redemption with respect to the souls of particular persons, in converting, justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying of them. By these things the souls of particular persons are actually redeemed, and do receive the benefit of the work of redemption in its effect in their souls. And in this sense the work of redemption is carried on in all ages of the world, from the fall of man to the end of the world.[7]

Edwards promises he will bring a consideration of the actual redemption of particular souls into this work, but, in fact, it never appears. Instead he is concerned throughout with the work of redemption as it

> is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world in a different manner, not merely by repeating or renewing the same effect in the different subjects of it, but by many successive works and dispensations of God, all tending to one great end and effect, all making up one great work.[8]

We shall find that this incomplete volume is still rich with material about the nature of Christ and his work among men, but it will not suffice to provide us with a comprehensive doctrinal structure for Edwards' christology. This volume, in brief, does not do what Edwards said he intended to do in the projected work: consider "the affair of Christian Theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ."

If the History of the Work of Redemption fails to give an adequate account of the "application of redemption

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[7] Works, I, 301.

[8] Works, I, 302.

with respect to the souls of particular persons," perhaps we ought to consider some of Edwards' more famous treatises on the soul and its operations. Certainly one of the best known works ever to have come from his pen is the book published originally under the title: A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, Which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame.[9] Perry Miller calls this book his "most sustained intellectual achievement,"[10] and Edwards himself assigned the subject matter of the book a place of great importance in his thought, for he believed that if he could not destroy the prevailing notion of "the self-determining power of the will" among modern divines they would then have

> an impregnable castle, to which they may repair, and remain invincible, in all the controversies they have with the reformed divines, concerning Original Sin, the sovereignty of grace, election, redemption, conversion, the efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit, the nature of saving faith, perseverance of the saints, and other principles of the like kind.[11]

And yet the volume for all its power and importance remains limited in scope. Edwards affords us scarcely a glance at most of the vital doctrines catalogued in the above quotation.

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[9] Freedom of the Will, edited and introduced by Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. v.

[10] Jonathan Edwards (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959), p. 251.

[11] Works, II, 474f.

The Religious Affections[12] is doctrinally much more comprehensive than the Freedom of the Will, but its focus is also too narrow for our purposes. The controlling impulse in the writing of this volume arises out of the disappointing consequences of the "late surprising appearances" of the Spirit in the Great Awakening. The text for this remarkable work is one which bears a marked relevance for the christological discussion in our own century: "Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." (I Peter 1:8) And Edwards was keenly alert to the problem of dealing with the operations of Christ on the soul exercised through his Holy Spirit in the period of his physical absence, but he is concerned here not with the nature of the Christ now physically absent, but rather with how one can determine which religious affections do truly arise from the operations of the Spirit.

The same can be said for most of his better known works. His dissertations on the nature of true virtue and the end for which God created the world, and his treatise on the doctrine of original sin are aimed at the problems inhering in the development of a single doctrine. His sermons and many of his shorter essays abound in material on Christ, but they suffer narrowness of focus on their side, inasmuch as they are limited to relatively circumscribed discussions of Christ's satisfaction or his "excellency"

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[12]Edited and introduced by John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

or his part in the covenant or his second coming. There are also several important essays on the trinity for which we need some indication as to how they are to be integrated into the overall christology.

It would seem, therefore, that we must look for some occasion in Edwards' life when, under the duress of no controversies, he paused to look out over the entire flowering meadow of his theology, and undertook to commend to his listeners a favorable view of it. Such an occasion is provided for us in the Boston Lecture of 1731. Edwards was 28 years old, and it had been five years since he had left his teaching post at Yale to join his famous grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in Northampton, when he was invited to deliver the Public Lecture. Except for his lineage and the prominence of his Northampton church, he was without fame in that city; but he was also without dispute there. The words he read from that lectern reflect the young man's awareness that some of the most influential personages in American Christendom were to seat themselves in his hearing that day with an attitude of critical but benevolent interest. He knew they were waiting to see what was to come out of Northampton; and he knew that some of them were bound to be disappointed. So the words are measured and careful; the sentences were made to be read easily and quietly. And yet, he manages to establish and sustain a mood of evangelical warmth; it is a sermon and not an academic discourse. But for us the most important feature

of this sermon is the comprehensiveness of its theology.

This was to be Edwards' first published work. He let it out under the title: God Glorified in the Work of Redemption, by the Greatness of Man's Dependence upon Him, in the Whole of It. The text is significant:

> That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (I Cor. 1:29ff.)

A. V. G. Allen said of this sermon and the circumstances of its delivery that Edwards "like an ancient prophet felt called to deliver his burden. The subject of his sermon was the absolute dependence of man upon God . . ."[13] Allen was wrong. There is, of course, no evasion in this sermon of man's absolute dependence, but that is not its subject. Edwards' subject is rather how marvelously God is glorified in the work of redemption by the thorough adequacy with which that work has been wrought. The distinction is perhaps subtle, but it is important. If Edwards had come to Boston to insist on the truthfulness of that hoary charge that man is entirely sinful in his entire being and to an exceeding degree, there would have been scriptural texts far more useful than the one from which he preached. Where Edwards chooses to meet St. Paul is not in the first chapter of Romans, or even the eighth, but in the context of a discussion about God choosing what is foolish and weak and despised in the world in order that

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[13] Jonathan Edwards (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889), pp. 56f.

they be made strong. The emphasis here is not on what man does not have, but on the extraordinary things God has given him. If the popular model for the doctrine of predestination is the puppet whose sources of vital movement are all in the external wires that connect him to his master, the model that characterizes the discussion in this sermon is rather the flower which, though altogether dependent on the earth and the sun, explodes into brilliant color in response to the abundance of soil and sky. And while Edwards will ask us to fix our gaze on the sun in these pages, he never lets us forget that the glory of the sun is inseparable from the beauty of the garden.

The doctrine which Edwards distills from the text after a brief study of it is lean and severe enough that for a moment Allen's complaint seems credible: "God is glorified in the redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him."[14] But then we see how it is that the redeemed are so dependent on God. First, "all the good that they have is in and through Christ."[15] Secondly,

> it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him. . . Thirdly. It is of him that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.[16]

Inasmuch as it is of the nature of dependence that

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[14] Works, IV, 170.

[15] Works, IV, 169.

[16] Works, IV, 170.

it does "especially tend to command and oblige the attention and observation"[17] toward that object on which one is dependent, we observe that the God on whom we depend for all our good is trinitarian. To emphasize this the young preacher develops his sermon around a formularized expression of the trinity. First, we have all our good *of* God the Father.

> It is of God that we have our Redeemer: it is God that has provided a Saviour for us.[18]

Next, we have all our good *through* God the Son.

> It is God that is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it.[19]

Finally, the redeemed have all their good *in* God the Holy Spirit.

> We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he is all our good.[20]

This gives us the broad outlines of Edwards' christology as it is profiled against the sun: all our good comes from God, but it comes through Jesus Christ; it is only through Christ that there is beauty in the garden, and only because of Christ, therefore, that God is to be glorified. But what *is* that good we have through Christ? And how does Christ look profiled against the earth? How

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[17] *Works*, IV, 176.

[18] *Works*, IV, 170.

[19] *Works*, IV, 173.

[20] *Works*, IV, 174.

does he look, that is, when he comes upon us from within our own midst? When Edwards turns to look directly at the Christ who appeared to us, he organizes his observation around the Pauline phrase: Christ "is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

> All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned with these four things, and cannot be better distributed than unto them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. He is made of God unto us wisdom: in him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world, it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. It is in and by Christ that we have righteousness: it is by being in him that we are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God's favor. It is by Christ that we have sanctification: we have in him true excellency of heart as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent, as well as imputed righteousness. It is by Christ that we have redemption, or actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.[21]

If anyone in the congregation that day in Boston had had the gift of seeing into the future, he would surely have marveled at the way in which this paragraph on the first published page of Edwards' theology summarized and organized the whole of his thought. For in the young theologian's view of the Christ who by the nature of his presence with us became all our good there is included every major theme that would appear in the flood still to issue from his restless pen. This is testimony to the fact that by the time Edwards had reached adulthood he had already clarified the categories by which he would work, and he

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[21] Works, IV, 169.

had carefully set before himself with great precision the overall design of his preaching and his books of divinity.

If anyone in the congregation that day had had the gift of seeing into the hidden past, he would surely have marveled at the abundance of material already produced by the young Edwards. For from the time he could put words to paper Jonathan had tried to catch in them truths and judgments which very few grown men have possessed. By his twenty-eighth year there were already hundreds of pages of argument and reflection gathered into tidy notebooks never intended for publication. In these pages he had laid down the foundation on which the rest of his thought would stand. The words he spoke at Boston were, therefore, not casually chosen. They were not the slightly reckless and vague sentences of the young minister whose mental artfulness had still to be matured. They were words that had behind them almost twenty years of precocious intellectual wonder and doubt. For this reason, too, the Boston Lecture will serve us well as a text.

Our procedure will be to pursue each of the four categories through which Edwards sees Christ. Under <u>wisdom</u> we shall learn how Christ becomes one with us in our understanding, thereby causing us to be one with him in his will. Under <u>righteousness</u> we shall follow that vast drama by which Christ makes himself movingly visible to the understanding, thereby affecting in man a vigorous and charitable relation

with the world--this being his sanctification. Since Edwards regards redemption as the "actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory," (italics mine) we shall conclude this study with an inquiry into the ingenious way in which Edwards can convert christology into history. In all of this we shall be reminded that Edwards has not only set himself apart from his past insofar as his understanding of Christ is not narrowly guided by established doctrine, but he has also written a christology which commands attention in the current theological discussion.

But before we set out it would be helpful if we could have some kind of a general view of the theological terrain we must now traverse. Among the most common general statements made of Edwards' theology by his students, and especially by his modern readers, is that a great division appears to be rent through the middle of it. According to this view, on the one side of that division are to be found works of astonishingly naive biblical literalism detailing such imaginative affairs as the arrival of the saints in heaven and the chaotic dispatching of the wicked into hell. These are the works which in the current religious and intellectual climate have marked Edwards as a typically fierce purveyor of weird speculations. On the other side, there are the rational works, the agile expressions of sublime truth, and the clear-eyed excursions into the human soul. These are the works which, set against

the primitive frontier of Western Massachusetts, seem to require some special explanation for Edwards' dispassionate and contemplative academicism. "For a long time," Allen reported nearly eighty years ago, "possibly as far back as the last century there has existed a suspicion, under whose various forms there was a common substance, that in Edwards' writing there existed a 'tentative' element which did not express his final conviction."[22] Allen was on the edge of suggesting that the "real Edwards" is to be found in "a vast amount of manuscript which, according to its curators, suppasses in extent his published writing."[23] Miller, who has read this vast amount of manuscript, plunges on over that edge. There is in those notes the crude outline of what "was to be the summa of Calvinism, for which his youthful notes on the mind and on science were the first drafts, which lay behind every sermon, for which he stored up meditations in his notebooks, of which the published works are fragments."[24] There remains in Edwards' writing, Miller thought,"an exasperating intimation of something hidden."[25]

This tension will not leave us soon. And insofar as a study of Edwards' christology will take us into the very heart of his theology, it will be necessary before we

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[22] Op. cit., p. 338.

[23] Ibid., p. 339.

[24] Op. cit., p. 49.

[25] Ibid., p. 50.

are through to have indicated how, if at all, these two sides are to be reconciled.[26] But it is important at the outset that we do not confuse the nature of this tension or division in Edwards' thought. A large part of Miller's hidden motive theory, for example, can be discounted if we ackhowledge the somewhat obvious fact that Edwards spoke and wrote for different audiences. There can be little doubt that when he wrote to the Princeton trustees he had his readers in mind:

> If some regard may be had to my outward comfort, I might mention the many inconveniences, and great detriment, which may be sustained, by my removing, with my numerous family, so far from all the estate I have in the world, (without any prospect of disposing of it, under present circumstances, but with great loss,) now when we have scarcely got over the trouble and damage, sustained by our removal from Northampton, and have but just begun to have our affairs in a comfortable situation, for a subsistence in this place; and the expense I must immediately be at, to put myself into circumstances, tolerably comporting with the needful support of the honours of the office I am invited to; which will not well consist with my ability.[27]

To his own daughter he could put the matter somewhat more directly: "I know I can't live at Princeton, as a President must, on the salary they offer."[28]

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[26] J. C. Feaver divides Edwards' thought as a whole into what he calls "traditionalistic" and "liberalistic" portions. One has the impression from this treatment of Edwards that he is not one, but two thinkers quite incompatible with each other. The brief section dealing specifically with christology as such does nothing to indicate how Edwards' thinking about Christ might reconcile these two sides, or how it might even gravitate toward one side or the other. But then, the christology that appears in this study is modeled after the orthodox lines which we have argued do not influence Edwards decisively. "Jonathan Edwards' Concept of God as Redeemer" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Religion, Yale University, 1958).

[27] Faust and Johnson, op. cit., pp. 409f.

[28] Ibid., p. 414.

To go as far as Miller does beyond the judgment that Edwards was at times sensitive to his audience and diplomatic, is to obscure the fact that he was from beginning to end a Christian pastor and theologian who sought to make the "sweetness" of the gospel so penetrate his words and life that those entrusted to his ministry could "taste" it. It is telling that he never sought a position in a university, and quickly abandoned the only one he ever held to take the assistant pastorship offered him at Northampton. Much is made of the irony of his removal to Stockbridge where he was to occupy the final years of his life with such tasks as catechizing the Indian children, but this was never an irony to Edwards himself. He never understood his office to be that of unravelling difficult theological and philosophical problems to render the Christian faith more acceptable and credible to sophisticated minds. His brilliant, well-armed attacks on theological opponents was not designed to establish impregnable quarters for thoughtful Christians, but to clear the minds and lives of men of all that prevented them from tasting the sweetness. And the gospel is no less sweet for the Housatunnock Indians than it is for Chauncy's Boston parishoners.

We must therefore be careful in the course of this study to distinguish between what was wrought by the intellect alone in its Olympian isolation and what was wrought by the whole man in the swift drama of an American frontier life. Miller's remark that the "real life of Jonathan

Edwards was the life of his mind,"[29] must be balanced with Ola Winslow's exaggeration in the other direction: "As the details drop away, and his significance becomes clearer within the present century, the conclusion persists that as a shaping force in American culture, the man himself has been more important than anything he ever did or said or wrote."[30]

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[29] Op. cit., p. iv.

[30] Jonathan Edwards (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 301.

CHAPTER I

A NEW FOUNDATION

A. Shifting Sand

Who was the tall, young preacher who rose to take the pulpit on that memorable Thursday in Boston? He had lived almost exactly half the number of years and days appointed for him, but who could have foreseen from the first half of his life what the second half would bring before the world? There were at least three prominent details in his background. It would have been generally known in Boston that he was the son of Timothy Edwards, the long and faithful, if not brilliant, minister in the Connecticut River parish of East Windsor. Certainly a fact of great interest to his listeners was his graduation from Yale College when both the preacher and the college were in their seventeenth year. But without question the most significant item in his biography as it was known in Boston was that Jonathan Edwards was the grandson of the redoubtable Solomon Stoddard, and now the successor to his influential pulpit in Northampton. It was because of this that he had been invited to Boston.

While each of these facts out of Edwards' past would seem capable of giving some definition to the man, they actually served to do just the opposite. To anyone

sensitive to the character of the age Edwards' very presence in that pulpit would have evoked a strong reminder that the high resolve and clarity of purpose with which the great "errand" into the American wilderness was begun, had long since collapsed into a dismaying ambiguity. Yale College was founded by the admirable intention of extending the orthodox stability of Harvard into another quarter of the colony, but its history was but an unbroken narrative of mostly petty cavilling. In addition to the quarrels over the location of the college, its doctrinal purity had been repeatedly exposed to the corrupting influence of such doubtful personages as Edwards' own tutor, Timothy Cutler, who bolted from the chafing harness of Calvinism and went over to the Church of England with several of his colleagues. As Perry Miller remarks, that scandal was fresh enough in the Boston memory it is quite unlikely that Cutler, who was now living in the city, was invited to hear his own student preach.[1]

If any present that day had balanced their suspicions about Yale with the thought that Edwards had, after all, been raised on the pure broth of Calvinism served inelegantly but adequately by his father, there would have been but restrained comfort. It was becoming evident that Calvinism had been sailing too many years without a clear-sighted captain and was now beginning to founder on the still uncharted shoals of a new world. While there was

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[1] Op. cit., p. 7.

never any evidence that Edwards would mutiny before that mast, there was still no indication whatsoever as to the character of his service. Many years later he observed during his inquiry into the freedom of the will that if one were to name the two major groups of disputants in the acrimonious debate "Arminian" and "Calvinist," he should "not take it at all amiss, to be called a Calvinist, for distinction sake."[2] But, on the other hand, he thought it a serious mistake to assume he is to be called a Calvinist "in the same manner, as the followers of Christ are called Christians."[3] Instead he declared, "I utterly disclaim a dependence on Calvin, or believing the doctrines which I hold because he believed and taught them; and cannot be justly charged with believing in everything just as he taught."[4] One of Edwards' Nineteenth Century apologists once remarked in anguish: "Edwards! What a career had been his, what discoveries had he made, if he had obeyed God instead of Calvin!"[5] Eschewing speculation as to how far it is possible to follow both Calvin and God, we must nonetheless attempt to ascertain with more precision the nature of the Calvinism within whose limits Edwards began his theological labors. If we fail to do this there is much we will not see in the second half of his life.

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[2]Freedom of the Will, p. 131.

[3]Ibid., p. 129.

[4]Ibid., p. 131.

[5]Mattoon M. Curtis, "Kantian Elements in Jonathan Edwards" (Berlin: 1906), n.p.

If it is indeed true that Edwards "must be regarded as the most eminent of American Calvinists,"[6] it is noteworthy that there are so few references in Edwards' writing to Calvin himself. In fact, in the Freedom of the Will Calvin's name appears only once, and he is never quoted. The probable reason for this is that the political and theological triumphs of Geneva were now two hundred years in the past; and over this period of time the world had suffered many changes. There were new philosophies before which the ancient truths of divinity had to be defended. There were new enemies of the faith with whom combat had become increasingly swift and subtle. There were new political and national institutions that provided ever new contexts for the Christian's conduct in the world. Calvin's mighty sentences no longer carried with them the irrefragable authority they once had simply because they were Calvin's.

What is more, Edwards was keen enough to see that the Calvin who did come down to their century was a "received" Calvin who had been thickly wrapped with the interpretations and distortions of his numerous and energetic spiritual progeny. Scarcely had Calvin diéd when Beza undertook the reorganization of his thought around what was but one of the motifs in the rich orchestration of his thought. When Beza surrendered the whole to the doctrine of the decrees, thereby putting several generations onto the habit of judg-

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[6]The History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 362.

ing orthodoxy according to the supralapsarian/infralapsarian distinction,[7] something of Calvin had been lost. The warmer and more personal features of the great doctrine seemed to have vanished after the Heidelberg Catechism's teaching that our greatest comfort in life and death is the knowledge that everything fits God's design for our salvation.[8] For it was not to be the Heidelberg Catechism but the Westminster Confession that would succeed as the normative symbol of the English speaking Reformed theologians. The divines assembled at Westminster brought the doctrine of the decrees to its supreme moment since they, more than the Synod at Dordrecht where the victory was one chiefly of superior numbers, managed to penetrate the whole of Reformed divinity with the concept of God's free and sovereign will.

But while the divines were sitting at Westminster compiling the 37 attributes of God, the genius of Calvinism was undergoing a dramatically new expression. The country was seething with a popular movement that had already been identified with the derisive name of "Puritan." This was a movement led not by the "witty" and moderate divines who were allowed by Elizabeth to prosper with careless and therefore harmless spirituality, but by preachers who knew how to reach the hearts of the populace with both the

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[7]Cf. Heinrich Heppe, Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche, ed. Ernst Bizer (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1958), pp. 120ff.

[8]Cf. Schaff, pp. 305f.

written and spoken word. Any man who attempts succinctly to characterize the Puritan movement is bound to err, for its spiritual vitality and its visible exuberance elude easy generalization. Certainly it can be said that the doctrine of predestination was no longer the roof beam raised high above an airy intellectualism, as it was for the Reformed orthodox theologians, but had become a part of the Puritan's appeal to the heart. It is probably an exaggeration to say that the "history of Puritan thought in England is primarily the history of the setting forth of the basic doctrine of predestination in terms calculated to appeal to the English populace,"[9] but Haller seems very near the heart of Puritanism when he writes that the persuasive strength of the doctrine, however often it was used, "sprang not from its metaphysical but its moral validity. . . . It suggested an attitude and a line of conduct. Put to the test of experience, it applied and worked."[10]

It was not the intellectual but the ethical that predominated in the Puritan faith. Man's life in this world was bound directly and personally to God. The Puritans did not look for some strategy by which they might encounter God outside the vicissitudes of history. If God was at work in them, there would be visible evidence of it in their lives. The question for the Puritan was not so much

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[9]William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 85.

[10]Ibid., p. 89.

what lay in the secret counsels of the Most High, but what lay in the heart of the man who served his Maker and Judge. Therefore, the Puritan became a student of his own soul in an effort to determine what it was God would find there. He became a diarist and catalogued his successes and lapses before the strictures of a life of high calling. "The most striking feature of the Puritan way of life revealed in these diaries is the overwhelming predominance of the ethical element. It was the good, rather than the beautiful or the true, which occupied the Puritan's mind."[11] And since the whole adventure of life for the Puritan was contained in the human soul the world became but the scene against which the drama was enacted. Though it is in the world where he is to progress, he is still a pilgrim in it and not a citizen. From the diaries it was a short step to the "Puritan saga of the spiritual life."[12] The path of the Puritan in this world was always blocked by Satan and the "main business of Christian wayfaring was war."[13] So successfully did the allegory of the Puritan Saga comprehend the spiritual life of the Puritan that Christmas and Easter even began to drop out of prominence.[14] The Christ who emerges out of this is not the

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[11] M. M. Knappen, Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, (Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1933), p. 2.

[12] Haller, op. cit., p. 142.

[13] Ibid., p. 150.

[14] Ibid., p. 151.

Christ of the Westminster Confession of whom we learn first he had been elected from all eternity, but he is "our grand Captaine" who takes up the battle against Satan in our souls.[15]

This dramatic new development of Calvinist faith and thought should not be considered simply another neutral fact lying quietly in Edwards' background. If it is true that by his time "Puritanism was all but dead,"[16] it is not coincidental that these themes rise up again with brilliant prominence in Edwards' own thought. As we follow him across the many thousands of pages of his works we shall be constantly reminded of his ethical seriousness. Contrary to many, if not most of his readers, we shall find that t there is overwhelming evidence that Edwards, like his Puritan fathers, could not countenance any intercourse between man and God outside man's limited historical situation. Edwards was no Platonist, no mystic, nor was he any sort of visionary who thought the mind had access to the truths of God that bypassed his experience in the world. But at the same time we cannot say that Edwards' mission to his world was simply to repristinate the doctrines of the Puritan divines or the spirit of their movement. He would not accede to doctrinal positions just because the Puritans believed them any more than he would because Calvin believed them. As we shall see, Edwards raised these

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[15] Ibid., p. 158.

[16] Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans, The Colonial Experience, (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), p. 9.

themes on a new foundation--one which he measured out and established while still a boy. He believed them not because they were taught by the Puritans, but because he found them to be true.

Care should be taken at the outset to focus attention on one feature of Puritanism in particular: the visibility of faith. With the Puritan's emphasis of the ethical it appeared undeniable to him that if God were at work in his heart it would manifest itself in action, and would therefore be visible to others. I shall argue over the course of this paper that this great Puritan motif is the decisive feature of Edwards' christology. It is the clarity of Edwards' understanding of the visibility of faith that sets his christology in sharp contrast both to that which precedes him and that which follows. But at the same time Edwards' tenacious consistency in conducting his ministry according to the principle of visibility brought into his own life its most tragic reversal. It precipitated, at the summit of his career, his dismissal from the church in Northampton.

Edwards' stunning introduction of the debate over the visibility of sainthood into the contemporary discussion seventeen years after the Boston Lecture was no novelty in the New England experience. This had been the most bitterly fought theological issue of the preceding century. We shall have an opportunity later to review the details of this debate, but here it is to the point to observe

that Edwards' presence in Boston would have vividly revived their memories of the great debate, since it was his grandfather who had played the most controversial role in it, and Boston's own Mather who had endeavored to better him. What may have been remembered best was that Mather, clad in all the armor of Calvinist orthodoxy, proved the Goliath in that struggle, and Stoddard the David. Eventually, Stoddard carried "most of New England with him."[16] But as Edwards' career will demonstrate Stoddard did not solve the problem of the visibility of sainthood; he only made it worse.

Therefore, when Edwards stood and took the pulpit in Boston it was a significant moment for the age and for the man. All previous alignments in American doctrinal and ecclesiastical history had become obscure. The old Calvinism of Increase Mather and the Seventeenth Century divines had become irrelevant and could no longer stand in the way of the increasing decline of New England piety. The spiritual immediacy of the Puritans had cooled, and the covenant theology which had so successfully combined the inner Puritan fire with external order had become rigidly skeletal. Those who, in the midst of this religious lethargy, allowed themselves to be convinced by Stoddard's sensible and human arguments now found themselves without any defense against Arminianism. Edwards, more than anyone else in New England, represented in his

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[16]Winslow, op. cit., p. 103.

person the full range of the spiritual ambiguity of his age.

But what makes that moment propitious in the religious memory of America is that Edwards himself knew this better than anyone. With astonishing clarity he could see that he stood on the shifting sand of an age in transition. He knew that the past had to be quickly and accurately appraised so that the best could be saved out of it; but he also knew that a forceful, new application of it was necessary if the church was to prosper in the age being born. Edwards had already probed deep under the shifting sand and had cleared away the solid rock on which he would erect a theology that would remarkably endure.

B. Solid Rock

When we look behind the Thursday Lecture to see what has transpired not in the age but in the mind of the man, our view is momentarily obscured by the predisposition of the students of Edwards' early published writings to see there clear evidence of his "Platonism" or "idealism." Perry Miller stands almost alone with his judgment that it is not idealism but empiricism that most properly describes the overall strategy of his thought--both early and late.[17] The texts that come out of this period are not easy to deal with. They are partial and mostly miscellane-

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[17] Op. cit., pp. 46f.

ous notes written when Edwards was still an adolescent. They reflect his deep desire to explore and challenge the ancient truths and to put new ones in their place. Where they bear the marks of genius, they bear also the lack of experience, a naive wonder about the world.

There is much in this material that commends our taking him to be speaking out of the tradition of idealism. Sometime after 1739 he had occasion to recount his conversion at the age of twenty, when

> I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. . . . This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and rapt and swallowed up in God.[18]

Although it would seem a bit too quick to conclude from this casual passage that "Edwards is convinced of the verity of mystical intuition,"[19] it is striking that he would report he had been moved not by his redemption but rather by the new kind of apprehensions and ideas he came to have of the work of redemption, and of the glorious way in which God hath wrought our salvation. It was this kind of expression that has caused his students to refer to his "philosophical idealism" and after his unpublished "Notes

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[18] Works, I, 19.

[19] I. Woodbridge Riley, American Philosophy: The Early Schools (New York: Russell and Russell, 1907), p. 31.

on the Mind" were discovered and printed by Dwight the speculation ran to investigating how Edwards, before he was scarcely out of his childhood, could have come upon any of the works of Bishop Berkeley. It was simply incredible that a mere youth on the American frontier could not only have read the works of John Locke, but could also have executed a critique of Locke remarkably similar to Berkeley's.[20] What some of his students[21] take to be a principal affirmation of his idealism is a remark that comes in the course of his investigation of Locke's teaching on the nature of substance:

> And indeed the secret lies here,--that which truly is the substance of all bodies is the infinitely exact and precise and perfectly stable Idea in God's mind, together with His stable will that the same shall gradually be communicated to us, and to other minds, according to certain fixed and exact established methods and laws; or, in somewhat different language, the infinitely exact and precise Divine Idea, together with an answerable, perfectly exact, precise, and stable will, with respect to correspondent communications to created minds and effects on their minds.[22]

Admittedly there is something Berkeleyan in this passage--the notion that it is the idea in the mind of God that constitutes substance. But at the same time there is also ground for calling Edwards a rationalist in the sense

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[20]Cf. Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), pp. 180f.

[21]Allen, op. cit., p. 14; Leon Howard, "The Mind" of Jonathan Edwards, A Reconstructed Text (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963) pp. 53f.

[22]Townsend, No. 13.

that there are available to the mind categories of thought that are identical in their operation to categories in the divine mind and that, therefore, all knowledge can be excogitated. "Rationalism is not the whole of Edwards' philosophy," Townsend argues, "but it is the basis of it."[23]

There is another feature of the Edwards research that tends to obscure our view of these early documents: a preoccupation with what is usually called the "philosophy" of President Edwards. Apart from the parochial theological arguments of the first part of the Nineteenth Century, Edwards has been remembered by the chroniclers of American intellectual history more for these tentative remarks about the nature of being and mind than for the immense production of his mature years.[24] This is all the more surprising when one discovers that apart from the analysis of the human soul nearly all the properly philosophical material in his corpus was written before his seventeenth year, and never appeared either in his published writings or in his private miscellaneous reflections. Where most

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[23] The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards from His Private Notebooks (Eugene: The University of Oregon Press, 1955), pp. viiif.

[24] Even Perry Miller, Edwards' most sensitive interpreter, is under the influence of this preoccupation. Edwards is not really a theologian for Miller; he is an artistswho uses theology as his medium rather than poems or novels. "If the student penetrates behind the technical language, he discovers an intelligence which, as much as Emerson's,oMelville's, or Mark Twain's, is both an index of American society and a comment upon it." Jonathan Edwards, p. v. Beginning here it is inevitable that Miller will decide Edwards' writings are an "immense cryptogram."

of his critics will look into the "Notes on the Mind" and its youthful companion, "Of Being," to locate those themes that prevail in his later thought, it would seem more appropriate to examine those documents in order to find why so little of it survives. Why does he no longer concern himself with such problems as substance, truth, rules of reasoning, identity of person, number, duration, and being after his senior year at Yale?[25] Can it be that his interests shifted, or that he changed his mind enough that he found these early conclusions inadequate, or will we find here evidence that his inquiries and speculations have found a conclusion that has put to rest such philosophical thought?

Since Edwards' thinking in this period of his life was formed and sharpened through his study of Locke, we must now push our inquiry back far enough to hear the voice that was speaking to the young Yale student, in order that we might the better understand why he replied the way he did. Near the center of Locke's philosophy is his proposition that the mind is furnished with a great number of "simple ideas conveyed in by the senses as they are found

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[25] I am following Howard's suggestion that Edwards wrote the "Notes on the Mind" in his senior year since "they are not only unconventional. They are rebellious. They attack the whole intellectual system of Yale, and, surprisingly enough in view of Edwards' later remarks about his youthful enthusiasm for Locke, they consistently attack his monumental Essay. They are the work of an astonishingly independent mind--a mind that might have had its independence bolstered by three years in a rebellious invironment." Op. cit., p. 8.

in external things,"[26] and therefore that knowledge consists accordingly "in the view the mind has of its own ideas." "The different clearness of our knowledge," he adds, "seems to me to lie in the different way of perception the mind has of the agreement or disagreement of any of its ideas."[27] "Knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the pereeption of the connexion of and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas."[28]

Aware that by now the reader will have thought he has been "all this while only building a castle in the air,"[29] Locke makes a significant move in his philosophy. He guarantees the connection of the ideas with external existing things. There are three kinds of existences with which our ideas are connected: our own being, God, and then all other sensible things. Where it is intuition by which we have knowledge of ourselves, and reason by which we have knowledge about God, sensation is assigned the task of providing the "necessary connection" between ideas and things. Sensation is made necessary only because "the having the idea of anything in our mind, no more proves the existence of that thing, than the picture of a man evidences his being in the world, or the visions of a

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[26] An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Alexander Fraser (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959). II, xxiii, 1.

[27] Ibid., IV, ii, 1.

[28] Ibid., IV, i, 2.

[29] Ibid., IV, iv, 1.

dream make thereby a true history."[30] Holding sensation to be a mental act separable from the idea we have of it, he can say that it "is therefore the actual receiving of ideas from without that gives notice of the existence of other things."[31] The term "actual receiving" reminds us that the whole of Locke's philosophy rests on his original conviction that the mind is "as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas," and that what furnishes the mind with "an almost endless variety" of ideas is "EXPERIENCE."[32] It is not on a metaphysical basis then, but by reflecting on what actually happens in experience, that Locke comes to affirm a connection between ideas and things. "He that sees a fire, may, if he doubt whether it be anything more than a bare fancy, feel it too; and be convinced, by putting his hand in it."[33]

And if one should ask what that is with which ideas are connected, Locke is utterly consistent. He refuses to give substance any metaphysical location or structure, but will only say that when many simple ideas are united in one subject under one name, "not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result, which therefore we call

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[30] Ibid., IV, xi, 1.

[31] Ibid., IV, xi, 2.

[32] Ibid., II, i, 2.

[33] Ibid., IV, ii, 7.

substance."[34] Precisely what substance is, we do not know.[35] It is our speaking about objects that intimates "that the substance is supposed always something besides the extension, figure, solidity, motion, thinking, or other observable ideas, though we know not what it is."[36]

From this it follows that when we come to judge whether knowledge be true, Locke must first insist that "truth as well as knowledge may well come under the distinction of verbal and real;" the first being an agreement between ideas without regard to that which they stand for, and the latter being an agreement between ideas which "are such as we know are capable of having an existence in nature."[37] Therefore, with a concept of such importance as "cause" Locke must use it as though its validity rested on a particular sort of relation both in the mind and in reality.[38]

When Edwards sat down to ponder Locke in the solitude of his "rebellious" mind he tacitly acknowledged his gratitude to the great British empiricist, then proceeded to demolish his system--and chiefly at two points. Part of young Edwards' critique deals with Locke's understanding

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[34] Ibid., II, xxiii, 1.

[35] Ibid., II, xxiii, 2.

[36] Ibid., II, xxiii, 3.

[37] Ibid., IV, v, 8.

[38] Ibid., II, xxvi, 1ff.

of substance. In momentary agreement, Edwards writes that if "we had only the sense of seeing, we should not be as ready to conclude the visible world to have an existence independent of perception, as we do." But then, perhaps recalling Locke's figure of the hand held out over the fire, he adds, "it is now agreed upon by every knowing philosopher, that Colours are not really in the things, no more than pain is in a needle; but strictly nowhere else but in the mind." He is challenging, in brief, Locke's easy assumption that sensation points to the existence of objects which "occasion" the sensation.

> For what idea is that, which we call by the name of Body? I find Colour has the chief share in it. 'Tis nothing but Colour, and Figure, which is the termination of this Colour, together with some powers, such as the power of resisting, and motion, &c. that wholly makes up what we call body. . . . If Colour exists not out of the mind, then nothing belonging to Body, exists out of the mind but Resistance, which is Solidity, and the termination of this Resistance, which is relations, which is Figure, and the communication of this Resistance, from space to space, which is Motion; though the latter are nothing but modes of the former. Therefore, there is nothing out of the mind but Resistance. . . . What is it that is resisted? It is not Colour. And what else is it? It is ridiculous to say, that Resistance is resisted. That, does not tell us at all what is to be resisted. . . . But now it is easy to conceive of Resistance, as a mode of an idea. It is easy to conceive of such a power, or constant manner of stopping or resisting a colour. . . . The world is therefore an ideal one; and the Law of creating, and the succession of these ideas is constant and regular.[39]

By eliminating the externality of substance it is obvious that Edwards has presented himself with a position that hangs on the edge of absurdity by its unashamed viola-

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[39]Howard, No. 27.

tion of common sense. We are now at the center of his so-called "philosophical idealism." It is here that he will go from the ideality of the world to the difficult notion that "Truth, in the general, may be defined, after the most strict and metaphysical manner, The consistency and agreement of our ideas, with the ideas of God."[40] Where Locke thought that truthfulness was related to agreement with reality, for Edwards it was God. It was not far from here to the position that "God and Real Existence are the same."[41]

But with what will prove to be a development significant throughout the remainder of his thought, Edwards indicates in this early manuscript that he was himself aware of the danger in this idealism:

> When we say that the World, i.e. the material Universe, exists no where but in the mind, we have got to such a degree of strictness and abstraction, that we must be exceedingly careful, that we do not confound and lose ourselves by misapprehension. That is impossible, that it should be meant, that all the world is contained in the narrow compass of a few inches of space, in little ideas in the place of the brain; for that would be a contradiction; for we are to remember that the human body, and the brain itself, exist only mentally, in the same sense that other things do and so that, which we call place, is an idea too. Therefore things are truly in those places; for what we mean, when we say so, is only, that this mode of our idea of place appertains to such an idea. We would not therefore be understood to deny, that things are where they seem to be. . . . Though we suppose that the existence of the whole material Universe is absolutely dependent on Idea, yet we may speak in the old, and as properly, and truly as ever.[42]

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[40] Ibid., No. 10.

[41] Ibid., No. 15.

[42] Ibid., No. 34.

It is here that Edwards leaves the clearly marked out philosophical preserve of idealism. There are reflections of it now and then in his mature thought, but the use of the term as a description of Edwards is no longer significant. The distinction to be drawn between the position indicated in the above quote and traditional idealism is that Edwards identifies the thing with the idea, and then eliminates the question of existence. Berkeley always felt it necessary to argue that for a thing to exist it had to be perceived. Edwards is arguing merely that things are perceived, and whether they also exist is an illegitimate question. Edwards, in short, has worked himself out of idealism by following a consistent path straight through the heart of it. And that the above quote represents a conclusion in his own thinking is evident in the fact that never again does he worry over the question of existence (as opposed to appearance.)

Moreover, it seems to have corrected other of his early speculations; never again shall we hear him identify God with "Real Existence." He now returns to the "old way" of thinking and talking and perceiving, and only once or twice will he admit to the necessity of doing metaphysics, but then only in a limited sense. "'Tis by metaphysical arguments only we are able to prove, that the rational soul is not corporeal; that lead or sand can't think; that thoughts are not square or round, or don't weigh a pound."[43]

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[43] Freedom of the Will, pp. 423f.

Having done away with Locke's understanding of substance Edwards is ready for a more serious and more significant disagreement with his great master. There is a certain awkwardness in Locke's description of how the mind actually thinks. In one of his definitions quoted above, he says knowledge consists "in the view the mind has of its own ideas." There are two difficulties in this. The first is that Locke seems to have conceived of the mind as a container of ideas. It is closed off from the world except for the windows which the senses provide. These permit images of existence to be collected in the mind. That Locke is resting on an unexamined and unnoticed metaphor--and not a strictly philosophical notion--is obvious.

The second difficulty follows from the first. Since he is under the influence of the container metaphor he cannot account for the process of thinking without providing another agent within the mind who can "view" the ideas stored there. He apparently thought it not possible that the ideas themselves could do the thinking. All of this is the result of his conception of substance as something apart from the perceived appearance of the thing, since now talk about things must be distinguished from talk about ideas; although it is evident that Locke was unable to talk about the operations of the mind except in metaphors borrowed from our talk about the things of the visible world.

This has an interesting consequence in Locke's own thought: it is impossible for him to find a place for

passions in the operations of the mind, except by admitting that pleasure and pain are simple ideas received both from sensation and reflection,[44] and from there permitting the passions to be but various complex combinations of the simple ideas of pleasure and pain. "Thus any one reflecting upon the thought he has of the delight which any present or absent thing is apt to produce in him, has the idea we call love."[45] "Fear is an uneasiness of the mind, upon the thought of future evil likely to befall us."[46] Passions, like thought itself, depend on the ability of the mind to have within itself another mind which can organize the many simple ideas of pain and pleasure contained in the former mind into one simple idea of love or hatred or fear.

Edwards' rejection of this portion of Locke's thought is less a demonstration of the boy's acuity than it is a result of Locke's own inconsistency, for it was from Locke himself that Edwards was to learn why it is absurd to speak of the will as being either free or not free.

> For, if it be reasonable to suppose and talk of faculties as distinct beings that can act, (as we do, when we say the will orders, and the will is free,) it is fit that we should make a speaking faculty, and a walking faculty, and a dancing faculty, by which these actions are produced, which are but several modes of motion; as well as we make the will and understanding to be faculties, by which the actions

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[44] Essay, II, xx, 1.

[45] Ibid., II, xx, 4.

[46] Ibid., II, xx, 10.

> of choosing and perceiving are produced, which are but several modes of thinking.[47]

If willing and walking and singing are but modes of thinking, why not also hating and loving and desiring and hoping? As young Jonathan's pen followed the burning edge of his reflections he came upon this inconsistency and wrote:

> LOVE is not properly said to be an idea, any more than Understanding is said to be an idea. Understanding and Loving are different acts of mind entirely; and so Pleasure and Pain are not properly ideas.
>
> Though Pleasure and Pain may imply perception in their nature, yet it does not follow, that they are properly ideas. There is an Act of the mind in it. An idea is only a perception, wherein the mind is passive or rather subjective. The Acts of the mind are not merely ideas. All Acts of the mind, about its ideas are not themselves mere ideas.
>
> Pleasure and Pain have their seat in the Will, and not in the Understanding. The Will, Choice, etc. is nothing else, but the mind's being pleased with an idea, or having a superior pleasedness in something thought of, or a desire of a future thing, or a pleasedness in the thought of our union with the thing, or a pleasedness in such a state of ourselves, and a degree of pain while we are not in that state, or a disagreeable conception of the contrary state at that time when we desire it.[48]

In this brief passage Edwards exposes not only his independence from Locke by his ability to see that pleasure and pain are not ideas but acts of the whole mind, but he also presaged the heart of his attack against the Arminians which consisted in the unity of will and understanding. Understanding and loving are not only made acts of the mind--though distinct from one another--but they are securely fixed to each other, inasmuch as when the mind is pleased

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[47] Ibid., II, xxi, 17.

[48] Howard, No. 67.

with an idea it does not have an idea of pleasure but an act of the will in that direction.

C. The Consequences

More than ten years before Edwards delivered his Boston Lecture he had set out before his own mind philosophical conclusions still unknown to the world. Edwards was standing on a new foundation, and what he was about to erect on it would have both originality and power. He laid this foundation in his youthful encounter with John Locke. When he set his precocious mind against the Lockean philosophy he found it to be weak at two decisive points. First, he found that Locke could not account for substance. The dramatic consequences of this discovery can hardly be exaggerated. In the first place, it meant that the mind cannot be thought capable of going behind the appearances of things to their "reality." The mind cannot deal with anything more than that which appears to it through the sense perceptions. This does a great deal of damage to the Lockean philosophy because it means, in the second place, that his criterion for truth judgments has to be abandoned. Locke thought that those perceptions were accurate and those sentences true which were related accurately to the actual substance they named. It was always possible for Locke to develop a relatively safe quantity of knowledge about the world--one which rested on the real stuff as it

was located by sense perception.

But the full drama in this interaction of ideas does not become fully apparent until we begin to see what sort of theological consequences obtain in Edwards' improvement of Locke. Locke thought he could rest on the solid empirical knowledge of the real world acquired through the senses, while he looked after God with his intuition. He drew a sharp line between the knowledge of the world and the knowledge of God. When Edwards denied the mind the privilege of going behind the perceptions to the actual substance as a way of making truth judgments, he enclosed it within that which appears to the mind. And if the mind cannot go beyond the appearances then it has no access to truths which comprehend that that lies beyond the edges of human experience. The mind is not equipped with innate ideas which are universally valid without reference to the world. Nor does the mind have any special access to secret realms of truth, any vision into the nature of being as a whole. That is true which appears to be true, Edwards is saying. God cannot be found by use of the intuition. He must be found in that which appears, and the truth about God must be an apparent truth.

In another age Edwards might have been considered a thorough relativist, a scoffer at the presumptiousness of those who speculate about the nature of reality or who desire to enter into the hidden verities of the divine. In language more compatible with the discussion of our own

age, we might say that the chief consequence of these early intellectual exercises is that man now has no means for transcending the historical. He can escape neither into his own soul, nor out of the public and visible world. His relation to God, then, must also be within the limits of history. If man is to be able to know and serve God it must be a God whose visibility is purely historical.

But we may not overlook the other great Lockean wall that fell before Edwards' trumpets. When Locke taught that in the "inquiry about liberty, I think the question is not proper, whether the will be free, but whether the man be free,"[49] Edwards learned that the proper question is not whether the mind thinks, but whether the man thinks; not whether the mind is capable of love, or envy, but whether these are acts of the whole man. Edwards fused together the understanding with the will, the mind with the heart. The consequences of this are also far-reaching in Edwards' thought. As we shall see, it is not only man's understanding of God that counts, but also his willing response to God. God must appear in history. And man must respond in history. These are the two themes on which Edwards' christology is built: the apparent Christ and the visible believer.

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[49] Essay, II, xxi, 21.

CHAPTER II

MADE UNTO US WISDOM

A. An Historical Note

The Fathers gathered at Nicea in 325 were uncompromisingly clear on at least one christological problem: the divinity of Christ. Christ is very God of very God, they said in response to the Arians, and he is of one substance with the Father. But since it was Christ's place in the trinity that was the heart of the Arian controversy the humanity of Christ is almost entirely overlooked in the creed. The entire mystery of God's manhood is comprehended in the single Nicene term, enanthropesanta (literally, "was en-manned.")

It was Apollinaris, a strong defender of the Nicene theology, who set off the controversy concerning Christ's humanity. Bothered by what appeared to him to be logical inconsistency in the notion that Christ was both God and man, he tried to find a way of describing the union in Christ that would not combine those things so incompatible as flesh and spirit. He suggested that the flesh and the animating soul of the incarnate Christ originated in the human nature, but that the "place of the human reason (psyche

logike) was assumed by the Eternal Reason of God (the Logos)."[1]

In the controversy that followed the most decisive word to be uttered was that of Gregory of Nazianzen who in his criticism of Apollinaris laid down the principle that Christ could not save what he did not become.[2] And if the mind of man is to be excised from the person of Christ, then the very source of sin itself cannot be affected by Christ's work. The long controversy was momentarily concluded at Chalcedon in 451 with the phrases, "truly God and truly Man, Of a rational soul and body [en psyches logikes kai somatos], Consubstantial with the Father according to his Deity, Consubstantial with us according to his Humanity, Like us in all respects, apart from sin."[3]

Gregory's principle, now institutionalized in the formula of Chalcedon, laid a stringent requirement on all subsequent attempts to account for the person and work of Christ. From now on all those propositions which apply to human nature in general apply also to Jesus of Nazareth, except where they have reference to man's sinfulness or to the consequences of his sinfulness. It is the exception

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[1]B. A. Gerrish (ed.), The Faith of Christendom (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1963), p. 60.

[2]Cf., Robert L. Calhoun, Lectures on the History of Christian Doctrine (New Haven: By the author, 1957), p. 182.

[3]Gerrish, op. cit., p. 65.

that greatly thickens the plot of christology. For once we have established what sort of man Christ became, then we must show that, on the one hand, though he was fully human he did not share in man's sinfulness, and, on the other, without overstepping the bounds of his humanness he had the power to repair that which had gone awry in man.

Gregory's principle applies no less to Edwards' christology, and of this Edwards was himself aware. In the first of those sermons later to be published as the History of the Work of Redemption he said, "it was necessary not only that Christ should take upon him a created nature, but that he should take upon him our nature."[4] We must now take up the task of determining how Edwards conceives human nature. This will be done in two parts. First, we shall look at his understanding of human nature in general without reference to sin and its consequences in that nature. This will provide for us the basic conceptions by which we are to account for Christ's work and our response to that work. But such an understanding of man is not complete until we see in it why the relationship to another human--Jesus of Nazareth in particular--is of such decisive importance. This we shall not see until we have elucidated the character of man's sinfulness, for it was to correct this that God became man.

Edwards gives us a valuable clue for the initiation

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[4] Works, I, 397.

of this investigation in the first direct reference to Christ in the Boston Lecture: "He is made of God unto us wisdom: in him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding." Where other theologians might have used Paul's phrase to get them into a Logos christology, Edwards converts Paul's term into one of his own, and one which, as we have seen, stands at the center of his analysis of the soul--understanding. We must now look into Edwards' mature writings in which he attempts to complete these early notions on the soul. More specifically, we must try to learn what he means by "true excellency of the understanding."

B. Like Us in All Things

Among those volumes that penetrate into the nature of man's mind and heart certainly none raises a more prominent profile against the horizon of Edwards' later thought than the Freedom of the Will. Edwards begins the discussion of that topic with a remark strongly reminiscent of Calvin:

> As religion is the great business, for which we are created, and on which our happiness depends; and as religion consists in an intercourse between ourselves and our Maker; and so has its foundation in God's nature and ours, and in the relation that God and we stand to each other; therefore a true knowledge of both must be needful in order to true religion.[5]

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[5] Freedom of the Will, p. 133. Cf., John Calvin's opening remark in the Institutes of the Christian Religion: "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." Trans. F. L. Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, i, 1.

Then he adjoins the significant remark that the knowledge of ourselves "consists chiefly in right apprehensions concerning those two chief faculties of our nature, the understanding and will."[6] It will be necessary, therefore, to take some time to hear what he has to tell us in the long and difficult argumentation of this book.

According to Dwight's calculation the Freedom of the Will was written in four and one-half months. This moved Dwight to remark, "so far as I am aware, no similar example, of power and rapidity united, is to be found on the annals of Mental effort."[7] But even if many a chapter of this book "must have been temporarily laid aside while the great theologian paused to catechise the Indian boys or to set them a spelling lesson,"[8] it is still not surprising that Edwards could have composed the volume in this period of time. It was a question which was near the center of his mental reflections from the time of his "Notes on the Mind." His miscellaneous observations are full of references to the problem, and some of them are full length essays. Moreover, it is notable that Edwards' approach to the doctrine of the freedom of the will never varied from his days at Yale. This is a book that was long in coming, and when it came it bore in itself some of the very best of

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[6]Freedom of the Will. p. 133.

[7]Sereno Dwight (ed.), The Works of President Edwards (10 Vols.; New York: S. Converse, 1830), Vol. I, 533.

[8]Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. xiv.

his intellectual labor.

Before we enter into the argument itself, we should first observe that it is informed most decisively by the two discoveries Edwards made in his early reading of Locke: the single agency of the mind, and his distinctive notion of the ideality of the world. It is by means of these two themes that we shall analyse the argument.

The single agency of the mind plays a decisive part both in his definitions of the will and in his explanation of the way in which the will is determined. The will "is plainly, that by which the mind chooses anything. The faculty of the will is that faculty or power or principle of mind by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice."[9] But why does the will choose, and what determines which object it shall choose? His first answer to these queries is that "it is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will. . . . By 'motive' I mean the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly."[10] A motive is therefore not something operating on the will from the outside, as it were, but is rather the view of something external to the will. Those things which cannot be perceived cannot affect the mind at all.[11]

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[9] Freedom of the Will, p. 137.

[10] Ibid., p. 141.

[11] Ibid., p. 142.

But since we talk about the will being determined, and must therefore talk about its cause,[12] where will we say that cause lies? Is it in the mind, or is it in the world? If we recall that it is precisely this distinction which Edwards eliminated as long ago as the "Notes on the Mind" then we should not be surprised by the remark that most succinctly presents his teaching on the nature of the will: "The will always is as the greatest apparent good is."[13] As he goes on to "refine" this definition he explains

> I have rather chosen to express myself thus, that the will always is as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears most agreeable, is, than to say that the will is determined by the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable; because an appearing most agreeable or pleasing to the mind, and the mind's preferring and choosing, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct.[14]

But, of course, to say that the will is determined by the greatest good asks us to suppose that there is another agent in the mind determining which is the greatest good, and this would put us back in Locke's double agency of the mind. Edwards is quite willing to say that the will follows the last dictate of the understanding, but he wants always to caution us against thinking that by the understanding is meant, say, the reason. The reason might be one factor motivating the will, but it is by no means the whole cause of the will. Edwards insists that "the

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[12] Ibid., p. 141.

[13] Ibid., p. 142.

[14] Ibid., p. 144.

understanding must be taken in a large sense, as including the whole faculty of perception or apprehension, and not merely what is called reason or judgment."[15]

There is no doubt that what Edwards has so far wrought is a total determinism. There can be no act of the will without its cause; all acts of the will are determined. It is with this that most of Edwards' critics begin to smart, for on the surface it appears so contrary to common sense and common experience. But if we look in this volume for the consequences of the second discovery of the young Edwards we shall find it is agreement with common sense and common experience he is most anxious to achieve here.

We saw how, in his treatment of the ideality of the world, he could eliminate from consideration the question of the reality of things over against their appearance or apprehension by the mind. This led him even then to define cause as "that, after or upon the existence of which, or the existence of it after such a manner, the existence of another thing follows."[16] Causes are not in things, he saw, but in the perception of things. That his position endured the 35 years of reflection since that first definition is evident in his professed use of the word

> "cause," in this inquiry, to signify any antecedent, either natural or moral, positive or negative, on which

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[15] Ibid., p. 148.

[16] Edward, No. 26.

> an event, either a thing, or the manner and circumstance of a thing, so depends, that it is the ground and reason, either in whole, or in part, why it is, rather than not; or why it is, rather than otherwise; or, in other words, any antecedent with which a consequent event is so connected, that it truly belongs to the reason why the proposition which affirms that event, is true.[17]

But now Edwards' thinking about causation acquires a new and subtle emendation: he sees there are different sorts of propositions about the causation of events, and therefore different sorts of reasons for those propositions being true or false. There are propositions about events in the mind and propositions about events in the world. The former deal with what Edwards, following a distinction Locke had proposed,[18] calls "moral causes" and the latter, "natural causes." By moral causes he means "the strength of inclination, or motives, and the connection which there is in many cases between these, and such certain volitions and actions."[19] When men are under natural causes "they feel pain when their bodies are wounded; they see objects presented before them in a clear light, when their eyes are opened."[20] Moral causes are those which apply uniquely to human nature; indeed, we might even say that to be human is synonymous with being moral inasmuch as it is of the

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[17] Freedom of the Will, pp. 180f.

[18] Ethics, IV, v, 11.

[19] Freedom of the Will, p. 156.

[20] Ibid., p. 157.

essence of man that he have a capacity for "being influenced in his actions by moral inducements or motives, exhibited to the view of the understanding and reason."[21]

> And herein does very much consist that image of God wherein he made man (which we read of Gen. 1:26, 27 and ch. 9:6), by which God distinguished man from the beasts, viz., in those faculties and principles of nature, whereby he is capable of moral agency.[22]

To talk of moral causes, therefore, is not to represent the mind as though it consisted of an almost infinite number of perceptions or ideas which, like billiard balls, when once set in motion would continue to play off against one another according to rigid mechanical laws until the mind itself ceased to be. On the contrary, talk about moral causes is to be distinguished sharply from that kind of causation language, and in the sense in which Edwards is using the term we might say that in reference to mental events the cause of a man's action is identical to his reason for that action. It is perception and understanding that determine the present action, and not some event in the past. We can summarize this often perplexing doctrine of the determinacy of the will as follows: To say that all mental events are determined is merely to say that whatever a man does he does for a reason. It can be said with good reason that the determinacy of the will, when it is interpreted over against the distinction between moral and natural causation, does not violate common sense but accords with it.

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[21] Ibid., p. 165.

[22] Ibid., p. 166.

There is an interesting consequence to the distinction between natural and moral causation. Once Edwards has shown that natural causation does not belong to mental events, he can say that such terms as

> "necessary," "impossible," "irresistable," etc. in common speech, and their most proper sense, are always relative; having reference to some supposable voluntary opposition or endeavor, that is insufficient. But no such opposition, or contrary will and endeavor, is supposable in the case of moral necessity; which is a certainty of the inclination and will itself; which does not admit of the supposition of a will to oppose and resist it."[23]

There is a not uncommon inclination in matters of morality to offer excuses for oneself or another on the basis that there was something inside that compelled one to do the act. It was not something he wanted to do, but "he could not help it." Edwards is saying here that when we are talking about acts of the will under the notion of moral causation we are talking about what a person actually does, and not what happens or may happen within his mind. It is, in fact, the case that moral excuses done according to the pattern suggested above suppose that mental events are under some kind of natural causation. Otherwise they could not complain that they were caused to do something they did not want to do. Edwards wants to hold all moral discussion to the visible expressions of the will.

The Freedom of the Will is a polemical book. Its principal theses develop most clearly in the refutation of falsehood. We cannot have a complete understanding of

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[23] Ibid., p. 159.

Edwards' doctrine of the determinacy of the will and his distinction between natural and moral causation until we have seen how they are employed in disputation.

The Arminians never bothered to distinguish moral from natural causation, and it is on the basis of this oversight that Edwards centers the destruction of their position. He can show that if they will undertake to read determinism out of the soul, using in their arguments the concept of causation as it is shaped by the unexamined "billiard ball"[25] model, they will commit three serious errors: (1) Philosophically, they will be advocating what is fundamentally an absurd notion. (2) Ethically, they will not encourage responsibility, as they suppose, but rather the neglect of it. (3) Religiously, their position will push us toward spiritual torpor and blasphemy.

1. Philosophically, there is a contradiction built into the very term which serves as the key to the Arminian doctrine--self-determination. Even if this term did not contain on the face of it, the false doctrine of double agency (a will within the will) it still rests so decisively on the billiard ball theory that one must assume that to determine itself the will must be preceded by an act of the will. On this basis the very argument for freedom of the will disproves itself because it shows that the will cannot move unless it is moved by a previous expression of

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[25]The term is mine, not Edwards'.

the will, in which case it is not free. If we

> should suppose a long chain, of ten thousand links, so connected that if the first link moves, it will move the next, and that the next, . . . it appears that the motion of no one, nor the direction of its motion, is from any self-moving or self-determining power in the chain, any more than if every link were immediately moved by something that did not belong to the chain. If the will be not free in the first act, which causes the next, then neither is it free in the next, which is caused by that first act: . . . Thus, this Arminian notion of liberty of the will, consisting in the will's self-determination, is repugnant to itself, and shuts itself wholly out of the world.[26]

2. Ethically, the use of the old causation language will lead to even greater disaster. Dr. Whitby, whose defense of the Arminian doctrine[27] provided Edwards with one of the targets for his Calvinist thunderbolts, had argued that freedom was necessary for culpability; a person cannot be held guilty for that in which he had no choice.[28] But such freedom as Whitby wanted, Edwards saw, would cancel out all praise and blame. "For if an impossibility of avoiding sin wholly excuses a man; then, for the same reason, its being difficult to avoid it excuses him in part; and this just in proportion to the degree of difficulty."[29] This gives Edwards just the right formula since he can now say that for Whitby the more one is inclined to sin the more he is excused from it.[30] Sin is its

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[26]Freedom of the Will, p. 174.

[27]A Discourse (London: A. Ward & R. Hett, 1735).

[28]Freedom of the Will, p. 295.

[29]Ibid., p. 297.

[30]Ibid., p. 298.

own excuse from sin. Freedom introduces into the moral structure an action of the human mind separate from the acts of the whole man and asks that the man be judged on the basis of the invisible events in his mind; and the apologist for freedom is, at least in Edwards' judgment, the more passionate when that freedom is the more invisible--that is, when sin is the greatest, the claims of freedom are thought the most valid. Freedom of the will is therefore not just a philosophical error, but it provides the basis for ethical irresponsibility, for the privilege of being bracketed out of the corruptibility and finitude of historical existence. How far this is from the truly ethical for Edwards is indicated in his observation that on such an understanding of freedom one is excused on the grounds of his moral inability from answering to commands.[31] What is probably even more important is that he is also exempt from invitations.[32]

It is here that we meet Edwards' concern with the old Puritan doctrine of the visibility of sainthood. By the time the Freedom of the Will was written (1754) that doctrine had set off the controversy that brought to an end his long Northampton ministry. He had already and painfully learned in the confusing events of that tragedy that those who argue moral inability never take seriously the command that one be visibly sanctified, and therefore seeking for-

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[31] Ibid., p. 308.

[32] Ibid., p. 309.

giveness was for them without expense, even without meaning. But Edwards knew that their inability could not have been the frustration of an effort--it could only have been the absence of an effort. At this point Christian language about a new life in the world becomes meaningless because if moral inability is appealed to then talk about God and Christ is applicable to any kind of life in the world; it does not belong to any particular sort of public and visible action. Not only moral injunctions and invitations to faith, but also preaching and prayer and the use of scripture lose their authority. The pronouncements of the minister and the church can do no more than provide a pious endorsement of whatever it is the people are already doing.

3. Therefore, what is philosophically absurd and ethically irresponsible quickly and easily becomes religiously feckless and even blasphemous. If men become inured to the commands which issue from ethical authority and insensitive to the invitations extended in ethical kindness, then

> it clearly follows . . . that God has no hand in any man's virtue, nor does at all promote it, either by a physical or moral influence, . . . that all the instructions which he has given to men, from the beginning of the world to this day, by prophets, or apostles, or by his son Jesus Christ, . . . yea, all influences of his Spirit, ordinary and extraordinary, have no tendency at all to excite any one virtuous act of the mind, or to promote anything morally good and commendable, in any respect.[33]

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[33] Ibid., pp. 331f.

Once indifference, contingency or self-determination are admitted into the will, Edwards fears, not only will men be excused from moral government and all use of laws,[34] but God himself will be let out of history. Our business with God will be where we like it and when we choose. He will become

> a being, who, instead of being absolutely immutable, must necessarily be the subject of infinitely the most numerous acts of repentance, and changes of intention, of any being whatsoever; for this plain reason, that his vastly extensive charge comprehends an infinitely greater number of those things which are to him contingent and uncertain. In such a situation, he must have little else to do, but to mend broken links as well as he can, and be rectifying his disjointed frame and disordered movements, in the best manner the case will allow. The supreme Lord of all things must needs be under great and miserable disadvantages, in governing the world which he has made, and has the care of, through his being utterly unable to find out things of chief importance, which hereafter shall befall his system; which if he did but know, he might make seasonable provision for. . . . And it is in the power of man, on these principles, by his devices, purposes and actions, thus to disappoint God, break his measures, make him continually to change his mind, subject him to vexation, and bring him into confusion.[35]

Paul Ramsey is probably correct when he observes that for Edwards "the issue is a simple one: either contingency and the liberty of self-determination must be run out of this world, or God will be shut out."[36]

The reader is reminded that we began this analysis of Edwards' argument in the Freedom of the Will with the

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[34] Ibid., p. 304.

[35] Ibid., pp. 253f.

[36] Ibid., p. 9.

purpose of determining in detail the significant features of the humanity which we share with Christ. Edwards himself put the understanding at the center of that humanity, and when we looked into the nature of the understanding we found it was inseparable from the will. Because the will can have no cause but the understanding it is said to be determined; but the sort of determination of the will which the understanding exercises is properly to be described with the notion that everything a man does he does for a reason. But we have also learned that man's mind, or his understanding, cannot extend beyond the strictly historical limits of his experience. It is not his intuition of trans-historical verities, but his experiential perception of the greatest good that appears to him in the context of the world, that determines what he does as a man. Even his reasons are historical.

We also learned that God cannot relate to man except through history. If man cannot be bracketed out of history, neither can God. There are two aspects to this conception of the relation between man and God: (1) the meeting between them must be moral in one sense--it must have to do with what man actually does in the world; (2) God can have no motivating role in determining what it is that man actually does in the world unless he provides man's understanding with a legitimate reason for doing it.

Is there any evidence in the Freedom of the Will that Edwards was sensitive to the christological require-

ment that as man is described so must Christ also be described? Edwards' references to Christ in this book are not abundant, but they are not so scarce that we cannot see by them that this question is to be answered in the affirmative. In a brief, fascinating chapter he states unconditionally that "if there be any truth in Christianity or the holy Scriptures, the man Christ Jesus had his will infallibly, unalterably and unfrustrably determined to do good,"[37] and, moreover, there were "promises of glorious rewards made to him, on condition of his persevering in, and perfecting the work which God had appointed him."[38] On the basis of these statements we may judge that the human situation is the same for Christ as it is for us--his will is bound, but his willful acts are subject to praise and blame.

However, in contrast to us his will is bound to do good, and therefore his willful acts issue necessarily in glorious rewards. But let us not make the Arminian error and suppose that Edwards is speaking of some sort of physical or natural determinism in the person of Christ. He is saying of Christ, as he would say of man, that his will is bound to his understanding; and therefore to say that Christ is bound to do good is simply to say that there is a completeness or perfection to his understanding. Or, as Edwards put it in Boston, "in him are all the proper good

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[37] Ibid., pp. 289f.

[38] Ibid., p. 290.

and true excellency of the understanding."

But, in conclusion, we must take note of the fact that Christ is not merely another man living under conditions identical to our own; he is the man whom God became. It is through Christ that God presents himself to us, and since our relations with God have to do with what we actually do in the world, it must be that we can relate to him only so far as it is Christ who is our most apparent good. Paraphrasing the great definition of the will we can say that when Christ has become our most apparent good then we are as Christ is. Then we would be determined to do good as he was so determined. But this can be true only if our understanding is identical to Christ's understanding.

But we are getting ahead of our story, for we have not yet dealt with the fact that our understanding is incomplete. It is not truly excellent as Christ's was. "Children's coming into the world naked and filthy and in their blood, and crying and impotent," Edwards once mused in his private notes, "is to signify the spiritual nakedness and pollution of nature and wretchedness of condition with which they are born."[39] We are reminded with this that it is not just that Christ is like us in all things, but that he is like us in all things, except sin.

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[39]Perry Miller (ed.), Images or Shadows of Divine Things (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), No. 10.

C. Except Sin

The Fathers gathered at Chalcedon were confident that the dangers of Apollinarianism had been adequately met with the affirmation that Christ is like us in all things except sin. But their attention was focused on the first half of this phrase; it was the presence of the rational soul in Christ with which they were chiefly concerned. It was enough for them to know that since sin originated in the rational soul, that same soul would be in Christ. But the Council proposed no strategy by which we might distinguish our identity with Christ from the infinite gap sin puts between Christ and us.

This problem stands squarely in the path of Edwards' christology. If it is on the basis of the understanding and the will that we may be said to share in the same human nature as Christ, on what basis are we to be distinghished from him? The dimensions of the problem, as Edwards had to deal with it, were already obvious in Calvin who wanted, on the one hand, to define original sin as a "corruption of our nature"[40] in order that our culpability might not be easily dodged; and yet, on the other, to avoid understanding sin as so innate to our nature that it should not be we, but our Creator, who is finally to

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[40] Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. John T, McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (2 vols.; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), II, i, 8.

blame. Furthermore, if sin is to be understood as merely a natural corruption then Calvin would have been defenseless against the Roman doctrine that righteousness is a superadditum to a presently imperfect nature; and this, in the Reformer's judgment, would cast even greater odium on God since it would imply that his original work could be improved. Therefore, Calvin decides he must hammer through this problem by a direct verbal blow whether or not it destroys the logic of the situation at the same time:

> man is corrupted through natural vitiation, but a vitiation that did not flow from nature. We deny that it has flowed from nature in order to indicate that it is an adventitious quality which comes upon man rather than a substantial property which has been implanted from the beginning. Yet we call it natural in order that no man may think that anyone obtains it through bad conduct, since it holds all men fast by hereditary right.[41]

The key term here is "adventitious," for by this Calvin can argue that the original righteousness of Adam was "beyond nature" and thus could be taken away without disturbing nature itself.[42]

The question for Calvin, therefore, is not what was added to human nature, but what was restored to it. However, there is one sort of treachery in this notion with which Calvin was to be much less concerned than Edwards: the connection between the restored qualities of righteousness and human nature cannot be so adventitious

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[41] Ibid., I, i, 11.

[42] Ibid., II, ii, 12.

it is no longer necessary their restoration be by Christ alone. Calvin avoids potential disaster here by sheer assertion: "Christ restores them in us."[43] But Edwards has made too many clear-eyed journeys into the human soul and he knows that the Pelagian fumes let into the Calvinist bastion by the Arminians will not be expelled by mere verbal breath; the whole discussion must be opened up and exposed to the light and fresh air of a new psychology.

1. Man's Original Sinfulness

Edwards' writings are, of course, filled with direct, unargued claims for the truth of the doctrine of the fall of Adam and man's original sin, but since he never forgets that "the great Salvation by Christ stands in direct Relation to this Ruin, as the remedy to the disease; and the whole Gospel, or Doctrine of Salvation, must suppose it; and all real belief, or true notion of that Gospel, must be built upon it," he undertook in the last days of his life "a general Defense of that great important Doctrine."[44] This volume, which was the last he would personally see through the press, is solidly built on the foundation of his previous thought, particularly the conception of man's historical nature we found under

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[43] Ibid., II, ii, 12.

[44] Works, II, 307.

his argument in the Freedom of the Will.

A man's view of an object is determined not only by the limitations of his situation but also by the limitations and advantages of his own past. A person is not only one person in terms of space, he is also one in terms of time. Just as "a tree, grown great, and a hundred years old, is one plant with the little sprout, that first came out of the ground, from whence it grew, and has been continued in constant succession, though it is now so exceeding diverse, many thousand times bigger, and of a very different form, and perhaps not one atom the very same," so the "body of a man at forty years of age, is one with the infant body which first came into the world from whence it grew; though now constituted of different substance, and the greater part of the substance probably changed scores (if not hundreds) of times. . . ."[45]

Now if it is the case that the atoms will change hundreds of times, precisely in what does that identity consist? Edwards thinks that Locke's answer--"same consciousness"--is insufficient,[46] because, as we have seen, he is much more inclined than his great master to see the mind not as a producer of thought out of ideas but as the meeting place of idea and passion. Edwards is much more concerned with the kind of continuity provided by a man's

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[45] Ibid., II, 486.

[46] Ibid., II, 487.

moral agency or what he oftener refers to as his "heart." Therefore, the question with which this study opens: "As all moral qualities, all principles of virtue or vice, lie in the disposition of the heart, I shall consider whether we have any evidence, that the heart of man is naturally of a corrupt and evil disposition."[47]

Before we can arrive at an adequate understanding of his answer to this preliminary question we must first look at his definitions of "disposition" and "evidence."

> The way we come by the idea of any such thing as disposition or tendency, is by observing what is constant or general in event; especially under a great variety of circumstances; and above all, when the effect or event continues the same through great and various opposition, much and manifold force and means used to the contrary not prevailing to hinder the effect.[48]

And when he comes to the definition of "tendency," which for Edwards is a synonym for "disposition," he introduces another notion into his understanding of it. What is tendency but

> some stated prevalence or preponderation in the nature or state of causes or occasions, that is followed by, and so proves to be effectual to, a stated prevalence or commonness of any kind of effect? Or, something in the permanent state of things, concerned in bringing a certain sort of event to pass, which is a foundation for the constancy, or strongly prevailing probability of such an event? If we mean this by tendency (as I know not what else can be meant by it, but this, or something like this), then it is manifest, that where we see a stated prevalence of any kind of

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[47] Ibid., II, 309.

[48] Ibid., II, 310.

> effect or event, there is a tendency to that effect in the nature and state of its causes.[49]

A moral quality is a disposition of the heart, then, in the sense that it is observable as a regular and constant event, which will not come to pass without a cause. Obviously it is the matter of causation in questions of moral agency that is most debated; and as we saw in the enquiry into the nature of the will, Edwards clings tenaciously to this concept in the analysis of human behavior. Just how this will be crucial to the doctrine of original sin we shall see in a moment.

Since the constancy of those events associated with the moral agency are observable they will also serve as evidence of the strength and inclination of the moral quality. Whether there is such a thing as original sin can therefore be decided by mere observation. But first it is necessary to know what Edwards means by sin. What is it we are to look for? The nature of sin will not be perceived unless first we can see "the obligation we are under to regard the Divine Being; and that must be in some proportion to his worthiness of regard; which doubtless is infinitely beyond the worthiness of any of our fellow creatures."[50] Determining how great that obligation is has not been left "to our metaphysics or philosophy; the great Lawgiver, and infallible Judge of the universe,

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[49] Ibid., II, 318.

[50] Ibid., II, 324.

has clearly decided it, in the revelation he has made of what is agreeable to exact truth, justice, and the nature of things, in his revealed law, or rule of righteousness."[51]

Just what, then, does the law of God comprehend?

> The sum of our duty to God, required in his law, is love to God; taking love in a large sense, for the true regard of our hearts to God, implying esteem, honor, benevolence, gratitude, complacence, &c. . . . The chief and most fundamental of all the commands of the moral law, requires us "to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, with all our strength, and all our mind;" that is plainly, with all that is in us, or to the utmost capacity of our nature; all that belongs to, or is comprehended within the utmost extent or capacity of our heart and soul, and mind and strength, is required.[52]

What are to be observed then are the acts of the whole man. Now if we are still to wonder whether these acts, externally observed, will tell us anything about the true moral qualities of the person, Edwards can calmly reply that it

> is agreeable to the sense of the minds of men in all nations and ages, not only that the fruit or effect of a good choice is virtuous, but the good choice itself, from whence that effect proceeds; yea, and not only so, but also the antecedent good disposition, temper, or affection of mind, from whence proceeds that good choice, is virtuous. This is the general notion, not that principles derive their goodness from actions, but that actions derive their goodness from the principles whence they proceed; and so that the act of choosing that which is good, is no further virtuous than it proceeds from a good principle, or virtuous disposition of the mind.[53]

Here is the familiar Edwards thesis that in matters of

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[51] Ibid., II, 325.

[52] Ibid., II, 330.

[53] Ibid., II, 382.

faith and morals the distinction between the inward act of the understanding, or the principles on the basis of which decisions are made, and the action which results, cannot be made so strong as to permit judgments of one without regard to the other.

Edwards is certainly not saying, however, that any single action will have its origin in a correspondingly clear motive. It is rather that one must look at a large number of events in a large number of different circumstances and then make what in the tragic controversy over admission to communion in Northampton he called a "reasonable" judgment. Now if we do this, what is the result? None of us would deny, Edwards believes,

> that mankind are all naturally in such a state, as is attended, without fail, with this consequence or issue, that they universally are the subjects of that guilt and sinfulness, which is, in effect, their utter and eternal ruin, being cast wholly out of the favor of God, and subjected to his everlasting wrath and curse.[54]

There might be some question as to whether Edwards' survey of the evidence for this judgment has been adequate when it has consisted of nothing more than a few pages of quotations from Holy Writ, but there can be no question that for Edwards it is a matter of inviolable empirical truth that <u>all mankind</u> are by nature corrupt, that they are <u>altogether</u> corrupt, and that they are corrupt to an <u>exceeding degree</u>.[55]

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[54] <u>Ibid</u>., II, 317.

[55] <u>Ibid</u>., II, 424.

> Many kinds of brute animals are esteemed very noxious and destructive, many of them very fierce, voracious, and many very poisonous, and the destroying of them has always been looked upon as a public benefit; but have not mankind been a thousand times as hurtful and destructive as any one of them, yea, as all the noxious beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles in the earth, air, and water, put together, at least of all kinds of animals that are visible? And no creature can be found anywhere so destructive of its own kind as mankind are. . . . Where one wolf is destroyed by another wolf, one viper by another, probably a thousand of mankind are destroyed by those of their own species.[56]

Edwards' field of vision was perhaps obstructed with the pages of scripture, but these words could have been spoken by any sensitive observer of human affairs in our own century, even by one who has never been told in whose fall we sinned all.

But where one sees a tendency to sin, one will look for a cause; and where there is a very great tendency to an exceedingly grievous sin, one will look for a very great cause.[57] Once he has proved the universality of sin, and has said something of its seriousness, Edwards then proceeds to show how great is the error of those who want to find the cause of sin in the self-determination of the will. How does it come to pass, he asks,

> that mankind so universally agree in this evil exercise of their free will? If their wills are in the first place as free to good as evil, what is it to be ascribed to, that the world of mankind, consisting of so many millions, in so many successive generations, without consultation, all agree to exercise their freedom in favor of evil?

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[56] Ibid., II, 347f.

[57] Ibid., II, 362.

The immediate purpose Edwards had for writing this defense of the great doctrine of original sin was the refutation of John Taylor's book, The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin Proposed to Free and Candid Examination.[58] One of Taylor's more important arguments is that which held that such arguments for original sin as rested on generalizations about all of mankind could not be considered valid. There is no way of carrying out the investigation necessary to such generalizations, he said.[59] From what we have seen of Edwards' thought it should be obvious that this is an objection which strikes much more at the heart of his position than the appeal to self-determination. Edwards puts great weight on the possibility of observing a tendency toward sin. What is at stake in this question for him is not just that Taylor had become "the rage"[60] in New England and thereby threatened to reduce the manpower in the Calvinist camp, but that the understanding of Christ himself might be hopelessly fractured. Unless we can hold that man has a tendency to sin which "is inherent, and is seated in that nature which is common to all mankind, which they carry with them wherever they go,"[61] we must admit that there "is no

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[58]Cf., H. Shelton Smith, Changing Conceptions of Original Sin (New York: Scribner's, 1955), p. 13, n. 10.

[59]Cf., Clyde A. Holbrook,"Original Sin and the Enlightenment," The Heritage of Christian Thought, ed. Robert E. Cushman and Egil Grislis (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 153.

[60]Miller, Jonathan Edwards, p. 110.

[61]Works, II, 320.

need of Christ's dying," for "without Christ and his redemption, and without any grace at all, mere justice makes sufficient provision for our being free from sin and misery, by our own power."[62]

Edwards is so concerned to preserve the centrality of Christ in his understanding of sin that he is willing to shift the center of the argument from the ubiquity of sinful tendencies to the very nature of human existence itself. To be human is to be sinful. The sinfulness of man is not to be separated from his historicality. There is no cause outside of history (such as the imputation of guilt understood as an action of God that has no reference to the actual historical circumstances), nor is there any inner violation of history (such as self-determination) that can account for man's sinfulness. Sin is a natural corruption of man. For this reason Edwards has no trouble in showing that sin is original sin.

> Adam's posterity are from him, and as it were in him, and belonging to him, according to an established course of nature, as much as the branches of a tree are, according to a course of nature, from the tree, in the tree, and belonging to the tree. . . . Or if any dislike the word nature, as it is in this last case, and instead of it choose to call it a constitution or established order of successive events, the alteration of the name will not in the least alter the state of the present argument.[63]

This has the interesting consequence of relieving Edwards of the nasty problem of accounting for the trans-

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[62] Ibid., II, 464.

[63] Ibid., II, 479.

mission of sin. For if sinfulness is equated with humanness then so long as one human being will spring from the loins of another there will be a tendency to sin. On this basis Edwards can not only defend the teaching that with Adam we fell all, but he can ridicule anyone who hesitates before it.

> If the case were as Dr. Taylor represents, that the sin of Adam, either in its pollution or punishment, reached none but himself, any more than the sin of any other man, it would be no more proper to say, that by one man sin entered into the world, than if it should be inquired, how mankind came into America, and there had anciently been a ship of the Phenicians wrecked at sea, and a single man of the crew was driven ashore on this continent, and here died as soon as he reached the shore, it should be said, by that one man mankind came into America.[64]

More importantly still, this view puts teeth into the great Reformation doctrine of the imputation of guilt. Edwards can avoid the attribution of sheer arbitrariness to God by showing that since men are polluted by their very nature through the normal process of birth, "the sin of apostasy is not theirs, merely because God imputes it to them; but it is truly and properly theirs, and on that ground, God imputes it to them."[65] Therefore, we should be in error had we "supposed the children of Adam to come into the world with a double guilt, one the guilt of Adam's sin, another the guilt arising from their having a corrupt heart."[66]

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[64] Ibid., II, 436.

[65] Ibid., II, 493.

[66] Ibid., II, 481.

Edwards has consistently avoided every temptation to trace man's sinfulness, and therewith his guilt, to a cause outside history. Not free will, not even the imputative judgment of God, will serve to admit into his scheme any cause that operates outside man's experience in the world.

But if there is nothing outside his natural existence that will give rise to sin, then neither is there anything within history that will get him out of it. The hapless Dr. Taylor had argued that affliction and death, far from being the consequences of sin only, are "a great benefit, as they increase the vanity of all earthly things, and tend to excite sober reflections, and to induce us to be moderate in gratifying the appetites of the body, and to mortify pride and ambition."[67] But Edwards will allow no such evasion of the evils of the world, and especially will he resist it if the evasion is made on the basis of those evils themselves. If this is the reason God put the stamp of mortality on our lives and delivered us into what "is spoken of in Scripture as the chief of calamities, the most extreme and terrible of all those natural evils, which come on mankind in this world,"[68] then

> is it not strange that it should fall so heavy on infants, who are not capable of making any such improvement of it; so that many more of mankind suffer

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[67] Ibid., II, 374.

[68] Ibid., II, 373.

> death in infancy, than in any other equal part of the age of man? Our author sometimes hints, that the death of infants may be for the good of parents, and those that are adult, and may be for the correction and punishment of the sins of parents: but hath God any need of such methods to add to parents' afflictions?[69]

Edwards is easily and often scorned for his fierce affirmation that since "every man is born into the world in a state of moral pollution,"[70] not even infants may escape the savage consequences of original sin. But here more than anywhere else in his writings we can see how thorough a misunderstanding it is to read this into his theology. Edwards is not a heartless Jeremiah cruelly inveighing against even tiny babies for their wretchedness; he is crying out in the names of all men against the cruel limitations and vicissitudes of human existence. Infant mortality is not a proof of the odiousness of infants, but a poignant reminder that it is man's portion, as man, to die. This is the permanent and irrevocable nature of human existence on this globe, and Edwards will not let it be covered by something so foolish as a doctrine of free will.

But the significance of this feature of Edwards' understanding of sin is not exhausted when we have pointed out how accurately and passionately he has included the consideration of evil within the scope of his religious thought, for in his understanding of evil, it must still

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[69] Ibid., II, 375.

[70] Ibid., II, 472.

be said that evil is for us, just as it was for Adam, "not only a natural consequence, according to the course of things established by God and the Author of Nature; but it was also a penal consequence, or a punishment of his sin."[71] Therefore, what befalls us in this life comes not by accident but by desert. Our relation to evil is not properly to be described in terms of passive victimization, but rather in terms of the intending will; not in terms of what happens to us, but in terms of what we actually do. And since, as Edwards says in his exegesis of Romans 5, "it is by no means consistent with the apostle's scope, to suppose, that the benefit which we have by Christ, as the antitype of Adam, here mainly insisted on, is without any grace at all, being only a restoration to life of such as never deserved death,"[72] it is only when we see evil in this connection that we are ready to understand Christ.

In other words, having learned in the Freedom of the Will that neither God nor man will be let out of history, we hear Edwards saying now, when the discussion of the will has turned to its inherent tendency to sin, that neither Christ nor man be let out of history. If man be excepted from the causal determinism of human existence then there can be no room for a meaningful relation to the Christ of scripture.

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[71] Ibid., II, 480.

[72] Ibid., II, 852.

It would be instructive to pause here to examine Edwards' doctrine of original sin over against its background and its foreground. Looking back we find we cannot claim a great deal of originality for his view. He has held faithfully to the limits of the doctrine as Calvin defined them, insofar as there is a necessity for seeing in man a natural corruption. And G. P. Fisher makes a reasonable case that "President Edwards fell back on what was substantially the old doctrine of original sin. In reading his discussion we seem to be carried back to Aquinas and Augustine."[73] The "old doctrine" to which he refers is that which asserts a "participation on the part of the descendants of Adam in his first sin; in consequence of which they are born both guilty and morally depraved."[74] But as we have seen Edwards adjoins to the old teaching the Reformation doctrine of imputation. He has done this with such balance and skill that natural corruption and imputation seem to require one another.

Looking at Edwards over against the foreground, we can see that this balance was quickly lost. Nathaniel Taylor began to emphasize the voluntary character of man's sinfulness, letting both imputation and the harder doctrine of native corruption lose their decisiveness. This aroused suspicions that Taylor had invited Arminianism into the

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[73]George Park Fisher, Discussions in History and Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880), p. 398.

[74]Ibid., p. 356.

holiest of Calvinist doctrines. One of his critics felt he should "affirm it to be the doctrine of Calvinism, that God creates men with a sinful nature."[75] This affirmation could be made with the full support of Jonathan Edwards, he thought. But Taylor was claiming the support of Edwards, too, when he replied that "God does not compel him [a human being] to sin by the nature he gives him. Nor is his sin, although a consequence of Adam's sin, in such a sense its consequence, as not to be a free and voluntary act of his own."[76] Taylor's insistence on the voluntary character of sin is indeed consistent with President Edwards' view, but in the heat of the debate he failed to take full account of the latter's difficult teaching that determinism and voluntariness are not exclusive. It was inevitable for that reason that the "New Haven Conception" of original sin, shaped chiefly by Taylor, would have been considered liberal. The New Haven teaching exercised a strong influence on the Presbyterians as well as the Congregationalists. The New School Presbyterians who were inclined to follow Taylor, arguing that Christianity does not say "that the sinner is held to be personally answerable for the transgressions of Adam, or of any other man,"[77] were met with the Old School divines who wanted fiercely to maintain the

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[75]H. Shelton Smith, Op. cit., p. 91.

[76]Ibid., p. 109.

[77]Ibid., p. 127.

federal doctrine of imputed guilt. In the Princeton school the federal doctrine was to receive its most vigorous support, especially in the theology of A. A. Hodge, which resulted in the eventual dropping of the notion of the sinner's participation in Adam altogether. "The kinship of Adam and his descendants is a reason why he, and not another, is appointed their representative; but the justice of imputation depends exclusively upon the covenant or the federal relation in which he is placed."[78]

Calvin left the doctrine of original sin ambiguous since he wanted to say that it was a natural corruption inasmuch as there is a necessity of sin in man's nature, and, at the same time, that it was not a natural corruption insofar as God's role as creator is concerned in it. When Edwards seized on this doctrine he had developed a way of saying that God has total sovereignty in the human situation but man is nonetheless fully blameworthy and praiseworthy for his actions. But the inability of his successors to read the doctrine of original sin against the subtlety of his philosophical exploration of the will and the understanding made it impossible for them to hold together both sides of the doctrine. It was either human agency alone, or imputation alone.

But even if Edwards' doctrine of original sin can be commended for its ability to account for a full relationship between man and God, our concern here is rather with

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[78]Fisher, op. cit., p. 358.

the place Christ plays in the doctrine of original sin. We noted above that the historic shape of christology requires us to describe the human nature Christ assumes as like our own in every way except sin, and that the doctrine of sin must therefore be so designed that neither the sinlessness of Christ nor the sinfulness of man will compromise the true humanity which they share with one another. If that should happen then either Christ would be unable to accomplish his saving work, or man would be unable to receive it. It should appear here that Edwards has thrown a certain difficulty up before himself by his virtual identification of sinfulness and human nature. Has he left himself any room for the assertion that Christ is fully human and yet without sin? Or must the sinless Christ hover docetically like a luminous but unreal body somewhere above the horizon of human experience and understanding?

2. Adam's Original Righteousness

We can determine the degree to which Edwards succeeds in dealing with this theological problem by looking into his method of accounting for Adam's passage from righteousness into sin. If Adam can move from Eden into the desert without suffering any alteration of his basic human nature, then it is conceivable that Christ can be sinless and yet share in the same nature with sin-

ful man. This is all the more true in Edwards' thought since he makes it quite clear that Adam must have been created in a state of original righteousness.

> Adam's sin, with relation to the forbidden fruit, was the first sin he committed. Which could not have been, had he not always, till then, been perfectly righteous, righteous from the first moment of his existence, and consequently, created, or brought into existence righteous. . . . Adam was brought into existence capable of acting immediately, as a moral agent, and therefore he was immediately under a rule of right action: he was obliged to act right as soon as he existed, he was obliged even then to be inclined to act right.[79]

As we have an inclination to act in rebellion toward God, Adam was inclined in the opposite direction.

When Edwards comes to explain the difference between these two inclinations as they are understood from the point of view of human nature he manages to compress his entire understanding of it into one paragraph which I shall quote in full and analyse subsequently.

> The case with man was plainly this: when God made man at first, he implanted in him two kinds of principles. There was an inferior kind, which may be called natural, being the principles of mere human nature; such as self-love, with those natural appetites and passions, which belong to the nature of man, in which his love to his own liberty, honor, and pleasure, were exercised: these, when alone, and left to themselves, are what the Scriptures sometimes call flesh. Besides these, there were superior principles, that were spiritual, holy, and divine, summarily comprehended in divine love; wherein consisted the spiritual image of God, and man's righteousness and true holiness; which are called in Scripture the divine nature. The principles may, in some sense, be called supernatural, being (however concreated or connate, yet) such as are above those principles that are essentially implied in, or necessarily resulting from, and inseparably

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[79] Works, II, 385.

> connected with, mere human nature; and being such as immediately depend on man's union and communion with God, or divine communications and influences of God's Spirit: which, though withdrawn, and man's nature forsaken of these principles, human nature would be human nature still; man's nature, as such, being entire, without these divine principles, which the Scripture sometimes calls spirit, in contradistinction to flesh. These superior principles were given to possess the throne, and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart: the other to be wholly subordinate and subservient. And while things continued thus, all things were in excellent order, peace, and beautiful harmony, and in the proper and perfect state.[80]

There are three features of this remarkable passage that have special relevance to our present discussion. First, we should note that it is according to different principles that the righteous Adam and his sinful children are to be distinguished. A principle is not a permanent piece of the soul's equipment, as we saw above, but is rather a guide to its actions. Principles do not have to do with the human nature itself, but with what that nature actually does.

Secondly, if we ask more exactly what Edwards comprehends under the term "principle" we see that he has drawn a parallel here between the two principles, divine and natural, and the two scriptural words, spirit and flesh. And when Edwards turns elsewhere to examine the meaning of these two words, he follows what Calvin has already observed[81] that when Christ says, "'That which is born of the flesh, is flesh,' he represents the flesh

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[80] Ibid., II, 476f.

[81] Institutes, II, iii, 1.

not merely as a quality; for it would be incongruous, to speak of a quality as a thing born: it is a person, or man, that is born. Therefore, man, as in his whole nature corrupt, is called flesh."[82]

The whole of a man's life in this world is comprehended under the term, flesh, not just "what is now vulgarly called the sins of the flesh, consisting in inordinate appetites of the body, and their indulgence; but the whole body of sin, implying those lusts that are most subtle, and furthest from any relation to the body; such as pride, malice, envy, &c."[83] "Spirit" then refers also to the whole man, but a man "reborn," and therefore capable of such living as would make him "meet for the divine and heavenly kingdom."[84] The inferior or natural principles and the superior or spiritual principles, therefore, have not only to do with what a man actually does but also with the moral direction of his whole being.

Thirdly, if we inquire more closely into this matter and ask for a more complete understanding of what it means to live under the natural principle as opposed to the spiritual, a significant clue is given in this passage. While man was under the dominion of the spiritual principle, Edwards says, "all things were in excellent order, peace, and beautiful harmony, and in the proper and per-

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[82] Works, II, 414.

[83] Ibid., II, 416.

[84] Ibid., II, 417.

fect state." These are a series of terms which he does not pause here in this volume to elaborate, but from the time of the "Notes on the Mind" the concepts of rectitude, order, harmony, beauty, and excellency, all of which seem to function almost interchangeably in his thought, were prominent in his contemplation. According to Dwight's editoral judgment the first item in the "Notes on the Mind"[85] was entitled "EXCELLENCY."

> There has nothing been more without a definition than excellency, although it be what we are more concerned with than any thing else whatsoever: yea, we are concerned with nothing else. But what is this excellency? Wherein is one thing excellent and another evil; one beautiful and another deformed? Some have said that all excellency is harmony, symmetry, or proportion; but they have not yet explained it. We should know, why proportion is more excellent than disproportion; that is, why proportion is pleasant to the mind and disproportion unpleasant. Proportion is a thing that may be explained yet further. It is an equality or likeness of ratios; so that it is the equality that makes the proportion. Excellency therefore seems to consist in equality. Thus if there be two perfect equal circles or globes together, there is something more of beauty than if they were of unequal, disproportionate magnitudes. And if two parallel lines be drawn, the beauty is greater than if they were obliquely inclined without proportion, because there is equality of distance.
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> This simple equality without proportion is the lowest kind of regularity, and may be called simple beauty. All other beauties and excellencies may be resolved into it. Proportion is complex beauty.[86]

But beauty and proportion and excellency, as Edwards has

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[85]Howard, on the other hand, contends that Dwight erred in that judgment. It is his view that No. 1 in Dwight's edition of the "Mind" should be replaced with No. 71 and located later in the text. Howard, op. cit., pp. 17ff.

[86]Townsend, pp. 21f.

set them forth here, appear to be terms compatible with the private mental response to things in the world according to their "pleasedness," rather than with the acute moral dilemmas rising out of the confrontation with evil in all its ragged pain and confusion. But Edwards never intends us to separate beauty and excellency from ethical realities; the aesthetic and the ethical come over into one another in his thought. Already in the "Notes" he will say that disagreement of being with being is "the greatest and only evil; and entity is the greatest and only good."[87] It is only a short distance in his mind to those elastic, frustratingly abstract sentences he laid out at the end of his life for a book which two centuries later "has been said to have few peers in the field of ethics."[88] There is indeed "a beauty of understanding and speculation; there is something in the ideas and conceptions of great philosophers and statesmen, that may be called beautiful," he had written in The Dissertation Concerning True Virtue, but "virtue is the beauty of those qualities and acts of the mind that are of a moral nature, i.e. such as are attended with desert or worthiness of praise or blame."[89] When Adam passed from the spiritual to the natural principles he passed from the excellency of

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[87] Ibid., p. 24.

[88] William Frankena (ed.), The Nature of True Virtue (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. v.

[89] Ibid., p. 1.

moral beauty, from the harmony and proportionality of the soul's relation to the world,,to moral imperfection, to disagreeableness between man and being in general. Man did not pass from one kind of human nature to another, but he passed from one style of living to another. Thus, when Edwards attempts in his miscellaneous notes to describe the difference between the originally righteous Adam and Eve it is on the concept of rectitude that he seizes.

> Now the rectitude of human nature and of rational beings most certainly is that they should be most highly affected with the highest excellencies, and less affected with lower excellencies; that the mind should have the sweetest taste and most perfect, exquisite delight of those things that are truly most delightful, and a lower delight and slower relish of those things that are in themselves less delightful... . This is the rectitude of human nature, and thus humans once were; or else most certainly human nature proceeded from God as an inconsistent, self-repugnant, and contradictory thing. But we know, as well as we know that we have being, that this rectitude is not the present state of human nature but the right contrary, in all universally, till human nature, by some means after we are born, is wrought up into this rectitude again.[90]

Edwards never lets his attention wander from the hard realities of man's relation to the world, for the final judgment is not what pleasure there might be inwardly, but whether we love that which is most worthy of being loved.

We shall have occasion below to explore in detail what Edwards wants to include under the notion of true virtue, but so far we know enough to be able to see that the difference between Christ and other men in terms of their

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[90]Townsend, No. 34.

shared human nature is that the one so lives with his whole being that what he actually does with his life in the world is in harmony with being viewed as a whole, while the others have thrown their whole lives into actions which viciously disrupt the harmony and justice of society. When we remember that Edwards has with rigorous consistency fused the will with the understanding, then we can see that this description of the difference between Christ and us according to our virtue or moral beauty, is merely another way of saying that his understanding is marked by its excellency while ours is still incomplete.

Now we must ask how it is that man repossesses the spiritual principles lost in Adam--which is the same as asking how man is restored to his moral beauty, or how man's understanding will be made complete. We have already seen that man, inasmuch as he is held to the limitations of his personal history, cannot move from sin to righteousness of himself; we have seen that Christ must come into his view and must be so presented to his understanding that he will become for sinful man the most apparent good. When this happens we can say that the will of sinful man is as Christ is.

D. The Thesis Stated

We have now seen enough of Edwards' doctrine of man, from the vantage of its general composition as well as the damage it suffers from its sinfulness, to be able

to state the thesis which this dissertation is intended to defend. The heart of Edwards' christology, we shall continue to argue, is the proposition that the only saving relationship between Christ and the believer is that in which Christ becomes the believer's most apparent good. This relationship cannot be adequately described except from the role Christ plays in it, on the one hand, and the part the believer has in it, on the other. The former comes under what Edwards calls "righteousness" and has to do with the manner of Christ's appearance. The latter is covered by the term, "sanctification," which has to do with the manner of the saints' response.

We have several times hinted at another way of stating this relationship. It can also be said that Christ and man are related "savingly" when man's reason for acting as he actually does is Christ. Under this way of stating it we must attempt, on the one side, to ascertain how sinful man becomes convinced by Christ, and, on the other, to learn what it is man actually does when Christ is his reason for doing it.

CHAPTER III

MADE UNTO US RIGHTEOUSNESS

Nowhere in his writings does Edwards bother to settle down on a comprehensive definition of righteousness. We have already seen that it was righteousness that Adam lost in the fall. Elsewhere he speaks of a righteousness that is God's as distinct from man's.[1] Since it was the fall that set man over against God, righteousness can also be considered that which is at stake between man and God.

While these various uses of the term will not yield a definition they do bespeak a certain series of relationships that commends a procedure for determining what Edwards would mean by the doctrinal assertion that Christ was made unto us righteousness: (1) We have had opportunity to examine the nature of sin as it related to man himself; now, since our attention falls on the loss of original righteousness and the resulting complications in man's relationship with God, we must examine the nature of sin as it is related to God. (2) Since it was <u>of God</u>

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[1] Cf., the introductory section of the <u>Work of Redemption</u> where God's righteousness is defined as "his faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant promises to his church." <u>Works</u>, I, 297.

that Christ was made righteousness, we shall then discuss the relationship between Christ and God. (3) In the last chapter we saw how necessary it was that whatever Christ undertake, it be done within the human nature; therefore, we shall look to see how that Christ, now made righteousness, appears in his humanness. (4) Finally, inasmuch as it is unto us that Christ was made righteousness, we shall inquire into the way in which Christ's righteousness becomes ours.

A. Man and God.

All our ways of talking about God are "improper," Edwards admits,[2] but he rarely if ever felt himself inclined to abandon such talk. His writings abound with it. Sometimes it is charmingly rapturous; sometimes it is controlled by a severe and cold logic; sometimes it is unabashedly speculative and imaginative in seeming disregard of his own caveats issued against such vanity. When he is speaking of God in his direct relationship to man, there are two kinds of assertions commonly made: the first has to do with God's utter freedom which is expressed most systematically in his doctrine of the creation; the other has to do with God's being bound by the covenant. If he so desired, a skilled antagonist could amass an abundance of quotations from Edwards' "improper" talk about God to show that these

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[2] Ibid., II, 514.

two kinds of assertions give a contradictory character to the whole discussion of man's relation to God. But here the opposite shall be argued. The two belong together; and when seen together we find they are capable of elucidating much in our understanding of man as he stands before God.

1. God's Absolute Freedom in the Creation

The most imaginative and impassioned talk about God comes out of the notes written in his youth. Early entries in the Miscellanies are filled with statements that reflect the confident youthful enthusiasm of propositions freshly seized upon: "God is a necessary being because it's a contradiction to suppose Him not to be."[3] Before he was entered into Yale College he had already let his mind approach the darkness on the other side of this proposition--the possible non-existence of God--but he found it thoroughly untenable.

> That there should be absolutely nothing at all is utterly impossible, the Mind Can never Let it stretch its Conceptions ever so much to bring it self to Conceive of a state of Perfect nothing...So that we see it is necessary some being should Eternally be and tis a more palpable Contradiction still to say that there must be being somewhere and not otherwhere for the words absolute nothing, and where, Contradict each other; and besides it Gives as great a shock to the mind to think of pure nothing being in any one place, as it Does to think of it in all and it is self evident that there Can be nothing in one place

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[3] Townsend, No. 27a.

> as well as in another and so if there Can be in one there Can be in all. So that we see this necessary eternall being must be infinite and Omnipresent.[4]

One can hardly fail to note that this is precisely the form Anselm gave to the negative half of his famous proof: that necessary being on which the mind has fixed its conceptual attention "exists so truly, that it cannot be conceived not to exist."[5] But young Jonathan was not setting himself onto proofs for the existence of God; as he was crying out with the ecstacies of looking straight into the sun. How deeply he was touched by these early visions is made perfectly apparent in the narrative of his conversion, written some twenty years later and bearing signs of his nostalgic longing for experience no longer so poignantly available. In his experience of being suddenly "wrapt and swallowed up in God,"[6] he imagined his soul to be

> like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun.[7]

But in the years that separated these raptures from

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[4] "Of Being," Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. 18.

[5] Saint Anselm: Basic Writings, trans. S. W. Deane (La Salle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962), p. 8.

[6] Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. 60.

[7] Ibid., p. 63.

the written recollection of them, Edwards the pastor and Edwards the philosopher were required increasingly to direct more attention toward the actual bosoms of those flowers and the soil of the garden in which they grew. The delicious visions of God had painfully to be reconciled with the dull, actual stuff of the visible world. Not infrequently he regarded what he saw to be beautiful, and occasionally he encouraged his mind to follow that ancient inclination which even Kant found it difficult to subvert,[8] and supposed that the garden could tell him of the gardener.

> The being of God may be argued from the desirableness and the need of it. This we see in all nature everywhere, that great necessities are supplied. . . . The young of insects are not able to provide for themselves nor do their dams take care of them, but they, by instinct, are laid where they have their food round about them.[9]

To suppose that all of this happened by chance is as silly as supposing that

> in the showers of rain that fall out of the clouds on all the face of the earth for a whole year, the drops should universally fall in order on the ground so as to describe such figures that would be Roman letters in such exact order as to be Vergil's Aeneid written on every acre of ground all over the world, or so as exactly to write the history of the world and all nations and families in it through all ages without departing from truth in one fact or minutest circumstance.[10]

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[8] Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1961), p. 519.

[9] Townsend, No. 274.

[10] Ibid., No. 880.

But it would not be long before the young Edwards was to learn that the flowers round about him were much more likely to open their bosoms to one another or to close them up within themselves than to direct them upward toward the light. And since the government of the natural world is according to the "most perfect exactness or proportion, harmony, equity, and beauty," it is only consistent to argue that God "will maintain the most strict and perfect justice in proportion and fitness in what He does as the governor of the moral world."[11] And we have already seen that for Edwards the shape of justice in the moral realm may be comprehended under the word "desert." The veracity of that view, he feels, may be established by appealing to "what the consciences of all men do naturally declare. There is nothing that men know sooner, after they come to the exercise of their reason, than that, when they have done wickedness, they deserve punishment."[12] When the order of the garden is disturbed by the flowers within it, it is necessary that the gardener restore it; and how may he restore it except by undoing precisely that which was done and according to the same measure?

But what is the measure of sin? With his own eye on that great God in whom he longed to be swallowed up as a child, Edwards says with a logical force that belies the passion in which that logic originates, "if God

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[11] Ibid., No. 1196.

[12] Works, I, 584.

be infinitely excellent in himself, then he is infinitely lovely on that account, or in other words, infinitely worthy to be loved."[13] The conclusion to this line of argument is obvious, and he took it to that conclusion not once but many times in his preaching. In his "habitual and great solemnity, looking and speaking as in the presence of God,"[14] he exclaimed to his credulous congregation in Northampton, "a crime is more or less heinous, according as we are under greater or less obligations to the contrary. . . . So that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and so deserving of infinite punishment."[15]

Above we observed that the law, in Edwards' view, can be resolved into the love of God and our neighbor. This ordinary view can now be made to work with terrifying force in Northampton, for if this be our duty then "all sin may be resolved into hatred of God and our neighbor. . . . Sin is of such a nature, that it wishes ill, and aims at ill to God and man; but to God especially. It strikes at God; it would, if it could, procure his misery and death. It is but suitable, that with what measure it metes, it should be measured to it again."[16] It is

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[13] Ibid., II, 332.

[14] Thomas Prince, quoted in Winslow, op. cit., p. 129.

[15] Works, IV, 228.

[16] Ibid., I. 584.

quite unthinkable to Edwards, and indeed quite inconsistent with the flow of his thought, that there could be merely a neutral void between man and God--a void left vacant by man's ignorance or disbelief. The only separation between man and God can be one of mutual enmity. Men are naturally God's enemies.[17] In one of the entries in the Miscellanies he explains that this is why "the sin of crucifying X seems to have been designed of God to be a representative sin of mankind in general," for in this act it "appeared that sin aimed at nothing short of the life of God that in its nature it was a murderer of G."[18]

But sin, while it may seem to derail the powerful engine of God's purpose in the creation, is never allowed to destroy the order as it is seen from the perspective of God. While the flowers which bend downward or go to seed seem to damage the excellency of the garden--they damage only themselves. They are still useful to the gardener. "There are but two ways in which man can be useful, viz., either in acting or being acted upon. . . . there is no medium," Edwards explained in a sermon he called "Wicked Men Useful in Their Destruction Only."[19] Those who bring forth no fruit may be useful to God as a fruitless tree which is cut down for firewood.[20] Wicked

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[17]Thus the sermon, "Men Naturally God's Enemies," Ibid., IV, 36ff.

[18]Yale MSS, No. 762.

[19]Works, IV, 301.

[20]Ibid., IV, 305.

men "are fit for nothing else,"[21] but they are fit for that.

The earliest talk about God convinces us that for the young Edwards God was so utterly sublime, so far beyond the niggardly content of the human mind and so inaccessible to the speculation, that he could not have been thought limited by the world. But as he grew up in that world he began to give definition and precision to his conception of God's dealings with it. Where first there was the experience of being wrapt and swallowed up in God, the mature conception held both God and the world to be contained by a certain order. God is to be considered

> not merely as the Governor of a world of creatures, to order things between one creature and another, but as the Supreme Regulator and Rector of the universe, the orderer of things relating to the whole compass of existence, including himself; to maintain the rights of the whole, and decorum thorugh the whole, and to maintain his own rights, and the due honor of his own perfections, as well as to preserve justice among his creatures.[22]

Does this mean that where the young Edwards seemed to regard God as being possessed of absolute freedom, the elder has been obliged to compromise that freedom? On the face of it, we are given the distinct impression that when man sinned it caused God to take corrective measures in order that the balance of the whole might not be disturbed. But in the very last manuscript to come from his hand Edwards reaches back into the adolescent vision; he

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21, Ibid., IV, 304.

22 Ibid., I, 586f.

discloses that he never lost it, whatever else may have happened in his writings in the meantime. This disclosure comes in what Miller felt he should regard as Edwards' "most original and brilliant conception:"[23] the resting of personal identity not on natural succession, but wholly on the sovereign will and agency of God.[24] He did not pitch man against God by allowing us to think that God was leaping to the defense of his creation in response to each of the sinful acts of his creatures; but he went behind the very personhood of man himself. Why is man a person at all? How is it possible that this particular mound of flesh with this peculiar spark of consciousness could have the unity of personhood over the countless millions of separable moments since it came into being?

The path Edwards takes into the answer to this question is conventional enough: since created substance is dependent, it must be an effect and therefore have a cause; being dependent it cannot have itself for its own cause.

> Therefore the existence of created substances, in each successive moment, must be the effect of the immediate agency, will, and power of God. . . . It will certainly follow from these things, that God's preserving created things in being is perfectly equivalent to a continued creation, or to his creating those things out of nothing at each moment of their existence.[25]

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[23]Miller, Jonathan Edwards, p. 278.

[24]Cf. Works, II, 487.

[25]Ibid., II, 488f.

We have been arguing that Edwards was under a decisive influence from Locke, but that his reaction was one of critical correction rather than slavish duplication. The same might also be said of his relation to the writings of Isaac Newton. When Newton saw that the connection between things could be accounted for with the theory of gravity, he was alarmed; for if it were then allowed that "gravity is a function of solidity and so inherent in matter," God could be read out of the world, or at least some sort of a mechanical connection between God and gravity must be found.[26] But Edwards was not alarmed by this. On the contrary, he would employ Newton's vision of the universe to bear the God of his own childhood rapture. The God in whom Edwards longed to be swallowed up could now be understood as the God who was creatively at work in all things in each moment of time.

> If the existence of created substance, in each successive moment, be wholly the effect of God's immediate power, in that moment, without any dependence on prior existence, as much as the first creation out of nothing, then what exists at this moment, by this power, is a new effect, and simply and absolutely considered, not the same with any past existence, though it be like it, and follows it according to a certain established method. And there is no identity or oneness in the case, but what depends on the arbitrary constitution of the Creator; who by his wise sovereign establishment so unites these successive new effects, that he treats them as one, by communicating to them like properties, relations and circumstances; and so leads us to regard and treat them as one. When I call this an arbitrary constitution, I mean, it is a constitution which depends on nothing but the divine will;

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[26]Miller, Jonathan Edwards, p. 93.

> which divine will depends on nothing but the divine wisdom.[27]

Where Newton pressed into duty the theory of gravity, Edwards put the immediate agency of God. It is evident then that if the will is to be determined by its very human nature, it will also be determined when regarded from the perspective of the part God plays in it. It is no accident, of course, that Edwards proposes this conception in his volume on original sin. The context in which it arises is the discussion on imputation. How is it we actually share in Adam's guilt? We have seen before that when we focus this question on the human situation the answer is quite simply that we have actually done ourselves what Adam did; and for that reason God imputes to us Adam's guilt. But now when we come round to seeing God's part in the affair, we come straight on the daring notion of creatio continuo, which teaches not only that each moment is a new effect but that God may cease creating any one moment and the universe would pass into a void. We are pushed finally to what is a radical assertion of God's utter freedom, and to the recognition that all things, including sin and evil, have an "arbitrary constitution"--a constitution that depends on nothing but the divine will. We are one with Adam,--indeed, we are one with ourselves,--only because we are so viewed by God. Nor should we fail to note that the very rectitude of God's

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[27] Works, II, 489f.

acting in the world is in itself ever subject to the alteration of God's free will.

Edwards has succeeded in preserving the utter freedom of God by means of this extreme doctrine of creation, but in so doing he has left his flank exposed to one of the favorite attacks of the enemies of Calvinism: God, by this account, is still the author of evil. Calvin himself, as we saw above, blasted through this problem by sheer assertion, electing even to eschew the old method of covering over the embarrassment of this problem by the distinction between God's permitting and ordaining will.[28] Edwards will face this problem, all right. In fact, he will even argue that since we know that the sin of crucifying Christ was foreordained of God in his decree, and since this is "the head sin, and representative of the sin of men in general," it is therefore a "clear argument, that all the sins of men are foreordained and ordered by a wise providence."[29] But then Edwards, of all people, had a failure of nerve in the last moment and opted for the sophistry Calvin could not bear.

> The first arising or existing of that evil disposition in the heart of Adam, was by God's permission; who could have prevented it, if he had pleased, by giving such influences of his Spirit, as would have been absolutely effectual to hinder it; which, it is plain in fact, he did withhold: and whatever mystery may be supposed in the affair, yet no Christian will presume

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[28] Institutes, I, xviii, 1.

[29] Works, II, 517.

> to say, it was not in perfect consistence with God's holiness and righteousness, notwithstanding Adam had been guilty of no offence before.[30]

The surprising flabbiness of this conception in an otherwise spiritually muscular book need not be considered a serious flaw, since Edwards makes use of it only to keep our attention on the already well established view that man's sinfulness will not diminish the glory of God, nor will God's immediate agency in the affair lessen the wretchedness of man's sin.

2. God's Absolute Limitation in the Covenant

Miller is fond of the thought that Edwards has returned to the bold Calvinist affirmation of the freedom of God. In addition to such evidence as we have turned up in the previous paragraphs, Miller can point to a strong statement in the Boston Lecture. Speaking of God's gift of his only begotten Son, Edwards says the

> grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow: he might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit; it was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God that saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it.[31]

The freedom of God could hardly be more clearly stated, and when we remember that this remark is in what we have

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[30] Ibid., II, 483.

[31] Ibid., IV, 171.

regarded as Edwards' programmatic essay, it would seem to commend Miller's view that he has signaled in this sermon an abandonment of the covenant theology of his Puritan forbears, and has returned to the "pure doctrine" of Calvin "without the slightest mitigation."[32] While Miller will later qualify this claim,[33] it remained his conviction that Edwards "threw over the whole covenant scheme."[34] In an article on the role of the covenant in Edwards' doctrine of faith, Conrad Cherry suggests that Miller's "understanding of the covenant must be seriously questioned." In the first place, Cherry argued, Edwards did not in fact "throw over the whole covenant scheme," nor does the covenant require, as Miller suggested, fettering the Almighty to a human contract.[35] Cherry does not have far to look to verify his claim. In fact, it is somewhat surprising that Miller should have overlooked the rather frequent references to the covenant in Edwards' work. Occasionally Edwards will even speak in terms of the double covenant as it was set out in the Westminster Confession. In the "Annotations on Passages of Scripture," which Grosart selected out of the miscellaneous

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[32] Jonathan Edwards, p. 30.

[33] Cf., the 1959 editorial comment on his 1935 article, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," Errand into the Wilderness, pp. 49f.

[34] Ibid., p. 98.

[35] "The Puritan Notion of the Covenant in Jonathan Edwards' Doctrine of Faith," Church History, XXXIV (September, 1965), p. 831.

writings and published in 1865, Edwards makes a particularly interesting typological interpretation of Moses' breaking the tables (Exodus 32:19) which

> seems to signify the following things: (1) That sin breaks the Law, and particularly that it breaks it as a covenant of works. The tables were the tables of the Covenant. The ten commandments contained a new revelation of the covenant of works, of which two ways of fulfilment were proposed. One was by mere man, the other was by Christ. These tables of the Law were the workmanship of God, without any hewing of Moses's, as the tables of the heart of man in innocency, wherein the Law was written, were already prepared by God, and needed not any work of the Law or hewing of legal conviction to prepare it. (2) Another thing signified by Moses's breaking the table was God's breaking His Covenant between Him and the people, and so were threatened to be cast off from being His Covenant people.[36]

This passage clearly enunciates a double covenant scheme. The tables which were first hewn by God are assumed to be but the external expression of that which was hewn in the heart of man during his innocency. This was a covenant of works, to be fulfilled by "mere man." Since man failed to keep this covenant, God broke it altogether and threatened to cast his covenant people away forever. This is the preparation for a new covenant which will rest on something more than "mere man."

If this reference to the double covenant were a single, isolated instance in Edwards' thought we might excuse Miller, and even proffer a guarded agreement. But it is not. In a sermon on God's sovereignty, of all places, Edwards relieves himself of a remark that flies

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[36]Grosart, pp. 86f.

straight into the face not only of Miller's thesis, but of our own discussion of God's freedom in the preceding section. "Hence we learn," Edwards concludes an argument,

> what cause we have to admire the grace of God, that he should condescend to become bound to us by covenant; that he, who is naturally supreme in his dominion over us, who is our absolute proprietor, and may do with us as he pleases, and is under no obligation to us; that he should as it were, relinquish his absolute freedom and should cease to be merely sovereign in his dispensations toward believers, when once they have believed in Christ, and should, for their more abundant consolation, become bound. So that they can challenge salvation of this Sovereign; they can demand it through Christ, as a debt. And it would be prejudicial to the glory of God's attributes, to deny it to them; it would be contrary to his justice and faithfulness.[37]

God is presented here as being bound not only in the covenant of works, but also in the covenant of faith.

It is Cherry's view that Miller errs not only in excepting Edwards from the covenant theology, but even in his understanding of what the Puritans understood by the covenant, since "the 'agreement' nature of the covenant did not bind the Almighty to a human contract, as Miller suggests, but expressed rather a characteristically Puritan way of construing the meaning of the Christological revelation."[38] In his pursuit of this point Cherry quotes the above passage from "God's Sovereignty" and finds in it evidence that the restriction of God's freedom is made at the initiative of God himself. "Man does not 'tie up' God, but God ties himself to man in the covenant. Here is

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[37] Works, IV, 559.

[38] Op. cit., p.

the meaning of the Incarnation: God binds himself in covenant with the sinner, and in so doing God freely limits his freedom for man. The sinner-believer demands salvation through Christ, on the basis of God's binding himself in Christ, and never through or on the basis of his own goodness or obedience."[39]

I should not argue that Cherry is wrong; only that his discussion of this point does not go far enough. He has not eliminated the conflict between God's freedom and God's indebtedness as it is manifest in the covenant of grace with his reference to the incarnation; he has only moved the conflict back into the will of God. This may be the meaning of the incarnation, but is there nothing in Edwards' thought that will permit us to anchor this meaning in something more accessible to human experience than a mysterious, apparently contradictory act of will in the eternal and incomprehensible being of God?

The conflict before us is most precisely displayed in Cherry's strange phrase, "God freely limits his freedom." This remark departs so far from what we expect to find in Edwards himself that we are constrained to look back into some of the ground we have already covered to see if there is anything there which will indicate what Edwards could mean by God's relinquishment of his own freedom, and if it adds to our understanding of this matter to learn that God does this freely.

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[39] Ibid., p. 332.

Edwards ran freedom out of the soul, we recall, not because he thought there were physical reasons for judging the theory of determinism superior to that of self-determinism (indeed, he disqualified such reasons from the discussion of human volition), but because he thought the theory of self-determinism contradictory and even dangerous on ethical, philosophical and religious grounds. He insisted on the determination of the will in order that we might say that a man has a reason for doing what he actually does and can therefore be held responsible for his actions.

When Edwards begins talking about God giving up his "absolute freedom," it would appear that the kind of freedom that God is relinquishing is self-determinism. He is rejecting the notion that God will act without reason, without having an object before him which is the focus of his action. It is not God's own single agency that is the cause of his actions; in the covenant scheme Christ is that cause. But we must be careful to note that this is no limitation of God's eternity and infinity, for it is not as though self-determination were a divine impossibility, but rather as though it were a contradictory concept. It is not that it is impossible for God to be self-determining, but that it is impossible to think of God determining himself; talk about God's self-determination is meaningless, just as talk about man's self-

determination is meaningless. Moreover, if one is to talk about the divine volition at all, he will be required by the very concept of volition itself not only to affirm the determinism of the divine will--that is, affirm that God always has a reason for doing what he actually does--but he will be constrained to understand that whatever it is that God does, it is because the object of his will is the most apparent good. There is no instance in Edwards' writing where the matter is put in this way, but the very absence of any special theory for divine volition leaves us no ground for looking for any other understanding of it.

Now if we direct our focus back to the covenant scheme we shall find that a phrase such as "God freely limits his freedom for man" can make no sense in Edwards' terms. There is no way of understanding the covenant from within Edwards' theology except as a term descriptive of God's willful actions and therefore of the cause of those actions. The covenant, in short, comprehends the determination of God's will by that which is for him the most apparent good.

But what, we should now ask, is the most apparent good for God? For Edwards such a question would indicate that the inquirer had already passed over into blasphemy, for we have already heard him say that "if God be infinitely excellent in himself, then he is infinitely lovely on that account, or in other words, infinitely worthy to be loved." God must himself be his own most apparent good, and the

object most worthy of being loved. But if God is his own object of love, does this not make it necessary to speak as though he were determining himself? It is the doctrine of the trinity, which we shall examine presently, that saves Edwards from self-contradition at this point. There we shall see that God can express his love only ad extra through the Spirit; it cannot be expressed immediately toward himself, but only mediately through the world. And since man, too, is to be understood chiefly in terms of his ad extra actions, we can see that the only way in which the love of God can return to himself is through the love of man for God. Or, to make use of one of the more memorable of Edwards' phrases and one which we shall have the opportunity of examining in the following chapter, the only way in which man may look directly into the eye of the sun is to become himself "a little sun."[40] Man cannot simply be the lifeless target of the sun's rays; but he must so receive them that they will cause him to emanate his own.

3. Conclusion

In the ailing body and the exhausted mind of the Stockbridge missionary there still lived the enraptured child looking upward from his secret place alongside the Connecticut River and opening the flower of his soul to the blinding light of its sun. The man had learned at great

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[40] Religious Affections, p. 343.

cost to his own happiness what the boy could not have imagined: that men have not comprehended the light which has thus shown into the darkness of their world. But then the man never forgot what the boy learned: that nothing will evade or resist the immediate agency of the glorious God who is farther than the mind can reach and closer than the heart can feel. Far from being a mechanical device for reducing the boundlessness and incomprehensibility of God's glory before the ignorance and recalcitrance of human volition, the covenant in the hands of "America's greatest Calvinist" was used to show that talk of God's glory is not meaningful outside talk about human volition; and that human volition can be understood only with reference to God's glory.

But by now we are well ahead of our story. If our initial inquiry into the nature of righteousness in Edwards' thought will take us to the covenant, and the covenant to the glory of God, we must not omit the fact that the covenant was broken by man. While the righteousness of God has not been impaired man is without any at all. And since it is not merely the obedience of man that is at stake in the covenant, but the return to God of his love expressed ad extra, a new covenant has been made. But this one is not like the first covenant made with Adam which failed because "it was weak through the flesh, or through the weakness of human nature, to whose strength

and stability the keeping was intrusted." Now "God introduces another better covenant, committed not to [Adam's] strength, but to the strength of one that was mighty and stable, and therefore is a sure and everlasting covenant."[41] Since the first way of fulfilling the law--that is, "mere man"--failed, we must therefore look to the second which is Christ; and since the breaking of the first covenant was the loss of righteousness we must see now how it is that Christ is himself the righteousness by which the second covenant is made.

B. Christ and God

When we put together God's utter freedom with his covenantal limitations we found that we were brought before the recognition that God's will, like man's is to be explained in terms of that which is for it the most apparent good. God's will, too, is determined by his understanding. Whatever is wrought by God in his relationship with man is, therefore, wrought because it is for God his most apparent good. Now we must draw back into the being of God himself inorder to determine with more thorough comprehension what it means within Edwards' theology to talk of God's most apparent good.

Our examination of Edwards' doctrine of God in this connection will consist of two parts. In the first

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[41] "Perseverance," Works, III, 519.

we shall follow him through some of the most subtle distinctions he was to make in his entire career--those dealing with God's last end in creation. In the second part we shall attempt to discover what happens when God beholds himself as his own most apparent good. In this discussion we shall find that Edwards has written his doctrine of the trinity along lines parallel to those of his doctrine of the soul.

1. God's Ultimate End in Creation

In the Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World which Edwards wrote back to back with the Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue near the end of the incredibly productive period among the Indians at Stockbridge, he begins by characteristically "refining" the chief terms of the discourse. For the purpose of avoiding "all confusion in our inquiries and reasonings, concerning the end for which God created the world, a distinction should be observed between the chief end for which an agent or efficient exerts any act and performs any work, and the ultimate end."[42] This distinction is drawn by setting each of these two kinds of ends over against their opposite. An ultimate is opposite to a subordinate end, which is something an agent does not on its own account, "but wholly on the account of a further end,

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[42] Ibid., II, 193.

or in order to some other thing, which it is considered a means of." An ultimate end, therefore, is "that which an agent does for its own sake; that he has respect to, as what he loves, values and takes pleasure in on its own account, and not merely as a means of a further end."[43] Thus a man will eat honey, not for his health, but for the taste of it in his mouth.

A chief end, on the other hand, is opposite to an inferior end, in that it is the "end that is most valued; and therefore most sought after by the agent in what he does." That there is a difference between a chief and an ultimate end will appear when we consider that "two different ends may be both ultimate ends, and yet not be chief ends. They may be both valued for their own sake, and both sought in the same work or acts, and yet one valued more highly and sought more than another."[44] The chief end is that which among others is valued the most. Edwards is implying here that while everyone has a chief end, his chief end is not his only end; but if one has only one ultimate end, then that single ultimate end is also the chief end and "may justly be looked upon as his supreme end: for in such a case, every other end but that one, is an end to that end; and therefore no other end can be superior to it."[45]

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[43] Ibid., III, 193.

[44] Ibid., III, 194.

[45] Ibid., III, 196.

One more important distinction remains, and this, as we shall see, will be one of the key notions in Edwards' thought about the trinity and God's end in the context of his covenant theology. As the reader will recall from the discussion of the will, Edwards will quickly replace the phrase "most apparent good" with "that which is most agreeable." Now in the discussion of ultimate ends he makes his last distinction on the basis of agreeableness. Things are agreeable to an agent in two senses.

> (1) What is in itself grateful to an agent, and valued and loved on its own account, simply and absolutely considered, and is so universally and originally, antecedent to, and independent of all conditions, or any supposition of particular cases and circumstances. And (2) What may be said to be in itself agreeable to an agent, hypothetically and consequentially: or, on supposition or condition of such and such circumstances, or on the happening of such a particular case.[46]

There are two kinds of ends corresponding to these two kinds of agreeableness: "one of which may be called an original, and independent ultimate end; the other consequential and dependent."[47] Fortunately Edwards assists the reader in comprehending this distinction by providing him with an example. A man may love society as his original ultimate end. "An inclination to society may be implanted in his very nature: and society may be agreeable to him antecedent to all presupposed cases and circum-

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[46] Ibid., II, 196.

[47] Ibid., II, 197.

stances: and this may cause him to seek a family."[48] While his original ultimate end remains the same, there will be consequential ends consistent with the ultimate end, pertaining to the "government and regulation of his family," by which he would establish and maintain peace, good order, mutual justice and friendship.

This distinction will perform admirably in the arena of Edwards' thought, and the first instance of it is introduced immediately. "We must suppose," he says,

> that God, before he created the world, had some good in view, as a consequence of the world's existence, that was originally agreeable to him in itself considered, that inclined him to create the world, or bring the universe, with various intelligent creatures, into existence in such a manner as he created it. But after the world was created, and such and such intelligent creatures actually had existence, in such and such circumstances, then a wise, just regulation of them was agreeable to God, in itself considered. And God's love of justice, and hatred of injustice, would be sufficient in such a case to induce God to deal justly with his creatures, and to prevent all injustice in him towards them. But yet there is no necessity of supposing, that God's love of doing justly to intelligent beings, and hatred of the contrary, was what originally induced God to create the world, and make intelligent beings; and so to order the occasion of doing either justly or unjustly.[49]

Recalling that we are looking into Edwards' understanding of righteousness, we might find a significant aspect of it disclosed here. For it is obvious that it is not righteousness for which God created the world. Merely to restore that rectitude between man and God cannot be God's

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[48] Ibid., II, 196.

[49] Ibid., II, 197.

original end--and yet, it must be an end subordinate and therefore necessary to it, since the consequential ends of creation are consistent with the original ultimate end. But it also means that while sin will provide an occasion for God's righteousness to exercise itself, it is not as though sin has dominion over God, since his original ultimate purpose is not affected by specific occasions such as the fall. And yet, at the same time, it means that God's original ultimate end is expressed in everything that happens--even in sin. How this can be requires us now to look directly at what that end is.

There are two chapters in this brief volume. The first deals with what reason can teach us concerning the question of God's end in creation, and the second with what the scriptures contain. We should by no means expect Edwards to deny that "it would be relying too much on reason, to determine the affair of God's last end in the creation of the world, only by our own reason,"[50] although we are not left in darkness either. What Edwards finds to be the chief counsel of reason is that whatever that is "which is in itself most valuable, and was so originally, prior to the creation of the world, and which is attainable by the creation, if there be any thing which was superior in value to all others, that must be worthy to be God's last end in creation."[51] And what is that one thing superior

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[50] Ibid., II, 199.

[51] Ibid., II, 200.

to all others?

> If God himself be in any respect properly capable of being his own end in the creation of the world, then it is reasonable to suppose that he had respect to himself as his last and highest end in this work; because he is worthy in himself to be so, being infinitely the greatest and best of beings.[52]

Here Edwards appeals to the moral rectitude of the heart which, he feels, God himself must possess, and if therefore "moral rectitude of heart consists in paying the respect or regard of the heart which is due, or which fitness and suitableness requires, fitness requires infinitely the greatest regard to be paid to God."[53] Then in one of his most picturesque moods he asks us to judge this matter by imagining

> some third being of perfect wisdom and rectitude, neither the Creator nor one of the creatures, that should be perfectly indifferent and disinterested. . . Now such a judge, in adjusting the proper measures and kinds of regard that every part of existence is to have, would weigh things in an even balance; taking care, that greater, or more existence should have a greater share than less, that a greater part of the whole should be more looked at and respected than the lesser, in proportion (other things being equal) to the measure of existence, that the more excellent should be more regarded than the less excellent: so that the degree of regard should always be in a proportion, compounded of the proportion of existence, and proportion of excellence, or according to the degree of greatness and goodness, considered conjunctly. . . . And in this case, as the whole system of created beings in comparison of the Creator, would be found as the light dust of the balance (which is taken no notice of by him that weighs), and as nothing and vanity.[54]

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[52] Ibid., II, 200.

[53] Ibid., II, 201.

[54] Ibid., II, 201f.

But once he has established this point, he must still explain why it is that God should have wanted to express this regard to himself through the creation. And the answer, however inadequate, is that the attributes of God have a more glorious display in the creation than they would have had if there had never been existence outside God himself. God will emanate his glory just as sun its light, and roots their sap and life.[55] "But," he cautions,

> a disposition to communicate of its life and sap to its fruits, is not so properly the cause of its producing those fruits, as its disposition to communicate itself, or diffuse its sap and life in general. Therefore, to speak more strictly according to truth, we may suppose, that a disposition in God, as an original property of his nature, to an emanation of his own infinite fulness, was what excited him to create the world; and so that the emanation itself was aimed at by him as a last end of the creation.[56]

This theme in Edwards may encourage the notion that he is here under the influence of the Cambridge Platonists, or that he is perhaps himself a Neoplatonist. But that this judgment errs will be seen when we consider that God's communication of himself

> is really only to intelligent beings. The communication of Himself to their understandings is His glory, and the communication of Himself with respect to their wills (the enjoying faculty) is their happiness.[57]

In other words, Edwards is unable to imagine God's emanations merely falling on the creature without some active result. The important thing about these emanations

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[55] Ibid., II, 206.

[56] Ibid., II, 206f.

[57] Townsend, No. 332.

is not that they occur but that they excite in those beings who receive them similar emanations toward God, or what Edwards calls "remanations." In sum, we can say that God's end in creation is not merely the creation, nor is it the achievement of a certain structure or pattern in the creation, nor is it merely the emanation of his glory to a creation which will lifelessly reflect it; rather God's end in creation is accomplished when his moral, intelligent creatures make him their own last end. "There are many reasons to think that what God has in view, in an increasing communication of himself throughout eternity, is an increasing knowledge of God, love to him, and joy in him."[58] But if reasons are not enough there is divine revelation on this matter which can be consulted. And when he does so he produces abundant evidence making the verity of the argument from reason unexpungable. But the chief piece of evidence pertains to the scriptural account of Christ:

> Since the holy Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ is the head of the moral world, and especially of all the good part of it; the chief of God's servants, appointed to be the head of his saints and angels, and set forth as the chief and most perfect pattern and example of goodness; we may well suppose. . . . that what he sought as his last end, was God's last end in the creation of the world.[59]

And Christ's last end? As Christ was going to Jerusalem "his soul straitened with a view of that which was infi-

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[58] Works, II, 210.

[59] Ibid., II, 225.

nitely the most difficult part of his work, he prayed with his disciples, 'Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.'" Edwards concludes from this "it is pretty manifest that Jesus Christ sought the glory of God as his highest and last end; and that therefore...this was God's last end in the creation of the world."[60] And since Christ was doing this as the head of the moral world, then it can only be proper that we, too, are to seek the glory of God as our last end.

When we pushed back into the being of God to ascertain the character of the covenant, we found that the most apparent good for God--or what Edwards in the treatise on the subject called God's original ultimate end in the creation of the world--is the glory of God himself. But because it is of the nature of this glory that it be communicated ad extra, that is, outside the being of God himself and therefore to his creation, it is necesary that those who receive it "remanate" it or communicate it ad extra themselves. And since God is the most excellent of all beings it is only fit that the glory of God be communicated from the creature back to the creator. To put this into language more native to talk about volition, both divine and human, it could be said in conclusion that in the covenant established by God between himself and us the most apparent good for God is not man simply, but that man for whom God has become the most apparent good.

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[60] Ibid., II, 231f.

2. The Trinity

But we shall get ahead of our story here if we are not careful to see that there is more to learn of Christ's participation in the covenanting God as it relates to intra-trinitarian action. The doctrine of the trinity was not under debate during Edwards' own lifetime and, although there are a number of long entries in his miscellaneous writings of which some seem to be first drafts of books on the subject, he never bothered to publish anything himself on the trinity. As a result there was a good bit of speculation, not to say consternation, among his students and disciples for some years after his death, as they worried over the purity of his orthodoxy or at least over the strange fact that a mind so thorough as his should have left such a gaping hole in his system.

In 1880 the mystery surrounding Edwards' doctrine of the trinity was largely dissolved when Egbert C. Smyth published a brief essay which he had obtained from Sereno Dwight's brother, an essay apparently prepared for publication in 1783 by Jonathan Edwards, Jr. The latter, for a reason unknown, withheld the document from publication. A century later Smyth published it under the title given it by the author's son: Observations Concerning the Scripture Oeconomy of the Trinity and Covenant of Redemption.

But as Smyth correctly notes, while the essay effectively protects Edwards' orthodoxy, it is not directly concerned with the doctrine of the trinity itself, but with the covenant.[61]

Then among the papers of E. A. Park there was discovered another hitherto unpublished work on the trinity. This essay was printed on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of its author's birth, edited by George Park Fisher.[62] According to Fisher's judgment the essay was not written so much for the elucidation of the public mind as it was for the author's mind. It bears evidence that it was written down at many different times and then usually at great speed.[63] But, as Fisher observes, it is "the most comprehensive and complete discussion of the doctrine on all sides that has emanated from its author."[64]

Looking first at the Unpublished Essay, we find that it picks up where God's End in Creation leaves off. Since "tis common when speaking of the Divine happiness to say that God is Infinitely Happy in the Enjoyment of himself, in Perfectly beholding & Infinitely loving, & Rejoic-

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[61] Observations (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880), pp. 14f.

[62] An Unpublished Essay of Edwards on the Trinity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903)

[63] A detailed account of the history of the manuscript and its nature will be found in the Preface to Fisher's edition of it.

[64] An Unpublished Essay, p. xv.

ing in, his own Essence & Perfections. . . .

> it must be supposed that God Perpetually and Eternally has a most Perfect Idea of himself, as it were an exact Image and Representation of Himself ever before him and in actual view, & from hence arises a most pure and Perfect act or energy in the Godhead, which is the divine Love, Complacence and Joy.[65]

Since the idea of himself is perfect and since unlike the relations between man and man where one is in the image of the other rather than being that image itself,[66] we may

> suppose the deity to be truly & Properly Repeated by Gods thus having an Idea of himself & that this Idea of God is truly God, to all Intents and Purposes, & that by this means the Godhead is Really Generated and Repeated. . . . There is nothing in the deity that Renders it the Deity but what has some thing exactly answering it in this Image, which will therefor also Render that the Deity. . . . This Representation of the divine nature & essence is the divine nature & essence again: so that by Gods thinking of the Deity must certainly be generated. Hereby there is another Person begotten, there is another Infinite Eternal Almighty & most holy & the same G., the very same divine nature. And this Person is the second Person in the Trinity, the Only begotten & dearly beloved Son of G., the very same divine nature. And this Person is the second Person intthe Trinity, the Only begotten & dearly beloved Son of G.; he is the Eternal, necessary, Perfect, substantial & Personal Idea which G. hath of himself; & that it is so seemsc to me to be abundantly confirmed by the word of G.[67]

The second person can then be properly understood as the "Logos of G.," whether "we interpret it of the Reason of G. or of the word of G. If it signifies the Reason & understanding of G., I suppose it wont be denied that tis

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[65] Ibid., pp. 77f.

[66] Ibid., p. 86.

[67] Ibid., pp. 80ff.

the same thing with God's Idea."[68] And now since God loves that image of himself and since that image loves God, a sacred energy arises between the Father and the Son in mutually loving and delighting in each other.

> The deity becomes all act, the divine essence it self flows out & tis as it were breathed forth in Love & Joy. So that the Godhead therein stands forth in yet another manner of subsistence, & there Proceeds the 3d Person in the Trinity, the holy spirit, viz. the Deity in act, for there is no other act but the act of the will.[69]

By now it will be apparent what Edwards is doing. Like Augustine he is drawing his doctrine of the trinity out into an analogy with the nature of human agency. The father is the agent himself, "the Deity subsisting in the Prime, unoriginated & most absolute manner, or the deity in its direct existence." But, as in the treatise on the will, where the agent cannot be bracketed out of his agency--because to be an agent means to have understanding and a will that follows immediately upon it--the Father cannot be imagined apart from the Son and the Holy Spirit.

> The Son is the deity generated by Gods understanding, or having an idea of himself & subsisting in that Idea. The Holy Gh. is the Deity subsisting in act, or the divine essence flowing out and Breathed forth in Gods Infinite love to & delight in himself. & I believe the whole divine Essence does Truly & distinctly subsist both in the divine Idea & divine Love, and that each of them are Properly distinct Persons.[70]

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[68] Ibid., p. 91.

[69] Ibid., p. 94.

[70] Ibid., p. 110.

It was Fisher's judgment that the Unpublished Essay, even in its present state, is "one of the ablest arguments of this species which the History of Doctrine affords in behalf of fundamental positions of the Nicene theology."[71] But it we set this doctrine back against Edwards' examination of human volition, we might want to made such a statement with considerably less confidence than that which Fisher apparently possesses. Indeed, when we remember with what passion Edwards devoured Locke's teaching that the soul does not have an agent or agents, but is an agent, we might wonder whether this will not push Edwards into Sabellianism. But all of this is harmless speculation, since making such judgments implies that Edwards is operating in the same sort of substantialist categories of Greek philosophy which informed the Fathers of the Nicene theology. We have already seen that he had left that kind of thinking well behind him. I should merely like to judge that all talk of Edwards' orthodoxy with regard to the doctrine of the trinity is irrelevant and uninteresting, since there are other aspects of it that more wonderfully complicate the plot of his christology.

If we look for a moment at the way in which he conceived the Father as the agent and the Son and Holy Spirit as the Father's understanding and will, remembering that it is impossible to think of the Father not doing

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[71] Ibid., p. xv.

something ad extra, weccan now understand why God cannot be thought of apart from his activity in creating the world. We can also see that just as the will follows the idea, the Father will create by an act of love which follows on the idea he has of himself, thatiis, which follows on the Son.

> The World was made for the Son of God especially. . . . When God considers of making any thing for Himself He presents Himself before Himself& views Himself as his End, and that viewing Himself is the same as Reflecting on himself or having an Idea of Himself, and to make the world for the Godhead thus viewd & understood is to make the world for the Godhead begotten & that is to make the world for the Son of God.[72]

If Christ is the idea which occasions the creation of the world,then the world will manifest his image. We observed above that Edwards does not elect to follow the wisdom of a Logos theology, but on rare instances he will break into rapturous praise of natural beauty that sounds very much like it. There is a short piece in the miscellaneous writings which Edwards labeled "Excellency of Christ," in which he wrote:

> He, who, by His immediate influence, gives being every moment, and, by His Spirit, actuates the world, because He inclines to communicate Himself and His excellencies, doth doubtless communicate His excellency to bodies, as far as there is any consent or analogy. . . . So that, when we are delighted with flowery meadows, and gentle breezes of the wind, we may consider that we see only the emanations of the sweet benevolence of Jesus Christ.[73]

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[72] Ibid.,mpp. 132f.

[73] Smyth (ed.), op. cit., pp. 94f.

But Edwards was always less concerned to find evidences of Christ in nature than he was to make obvious the fact that the man who has been made in the image of the Son has since thrown his image into disrepair. Man now has "scarcely anything of those sweet graces, which are an image of those which are in Christ."[74] Thus we are drawn always to the classical affirmation that however great was the love of God expressed in the creation of the world, man has bolted from God in rebellion, he has become an enemy refusing to reflect back the glory by which he was fashioned.

Therefore, our most fundamental relationship with God is not through the creation but through the redemption, and it is with the redemption, of course, that Edwards is chiefly concerned. In the Unpublished Essay, however, he makes only preliminary, though suggestive, remarks concerning the trinitarian nature of the redemption. "Our dependence is equally upon each in this office," he says in what amounts to a formularistic summary of the work of redemption and one which he will repeat frequently over the course of his work.

> The F. appoints and Provides the Redeemer, & himself accepts the Price and grants the thing purchased; the Son is the Redeemer by offering himself & is the Price; & the H.Gh. Immediately communicates to us the thing Purchased. The sum of all that X Purchased for men was the H.Gh. . . . What X Purchased for us was that we have Communion with G. [which] is his Good, which consists in Partaking of the holy Ghost. . . .

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[74] Ibid., p. 96.

> Christ purchased for us True spiritual excellency, grace & holiness, the sum of which is Love to God, which is [nothing] but the Indwelling of the Holy Gh. in the heart.[75]

We were carried into this discussion of the trinity from our consideration of the place of the covenant in Edwards' thought which we took to be a term comprehending what God's last end is and how he will accomplish it. We found that God's original ultimate end is the love of himself which in God's End in Creation was described as possible only by the return of that love through man, only by what he called the "remanation" of God's glory. Then when we looked at this activity of God as it originates in his trinitarian being we found that, like man, God's will follows his idea; therefore, the accomplishment of God's last end will proceed according to a trinitarian pattern both in creation and in the redemption, inasmuch as the creation will be restored through the Son who will purchase for it the Holy Spirit or the love of God. The Son, or God's idea, will restore the original order to the relationship between man and God. Finally, we see that the completion of the Son's work consists in the restoration to the heart of man the rectifying love of God. Before we turn to the precise method by which the Son will complete his work, we shall look briefly at that second work on the trinity mentioned above in which Edwards combines the idea of God's last end with that of the covenant.

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[75] Unpublished Essay, pp. 120f.

In the assorted documents which Smyth collects into his little volume, there are three basic definitions which contribute directly to the present discussion: (1) the economy of the trinity, (2) the covenant of redemption, and (3) the covenant of grace. The economy of the trinity consists in the voluntary subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father, but a subordination that is in no sense a diminution of the full divinity of either.[76] Although Edwards does not deal here with the eternal generation of the Son and the Spirit, he does assume the ad extra communication of God's goodness. It should be noted that the ad extra communication, as it applies to the economy of the trinity, precedes the covenant of redemption. God is naturally disposed to communicate himself prior to his determination as to the wisest way of doing so. The particular method of his communication does not depend on his nature.[77]

Now Edwards finds compelling evidence in scripture for an

> eternal covenant between some of the Persons of the Trinity, about that particular affair of men's redemption; and therefore that some things that appertain to the particular office of some of the Persons and their particular order and manner of acting in this affair. . . . There is something else new besides a new determination of a work to be done for God's glorying and communicating Himself. There is a particular covenant entered into about that very affair,

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[76] Smyth (ed.), op. cit., pp. 21ff.

[77] Ibid., pp. 25f.

> settling something new concerning the part that some at least of the Persons are to act in that affair.[78]

The basis of this new agreement is the offense done to the Father by sin. The Father is that one person in the trinity who "is especially injured by sin, and who is therefore the Person whose wrath is enkindled, and whose justice and vengeance are to be executed, and must be satisfied,"[79] and so it is he who chooses the "Person that shall be the Redeemer, and appoints Him. . ."[80] The covenant of redemption, though it is distinguished from the economy of the trinity in this way, is not inconsistent with the latter since the new humiliation or subordination to which the Son is subjected by the Father is agreed upon by both according to their trinitarian dignity. It is a contractual arrangement between the Father and the Son alone, and it permits the Father to treat the Son in a way different from that required by his trinitarian status,[81] but at the same time it also means that the whole trinity is at work in the redemption.[82]

The contractual arrangement between the Father and the Son which is referred to as the covenant of redemption

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[78] Ibid., P. 28.

[79] Ibid., p. 29.

[80] Ibid., p. 30.

[81] Ibid., pp. 36ff.

[82] Ibid., pp. 41ff.

applies only to that period of time the Son is incarnate: from the moment of the incarnation to the end of the world. During this time the Son has two kinds of authority. The first is that which he holds according to his place in the trinity--he is Lord over the creation and in the redemption scheme he is, as God-man, "Head and Husband of the Church," an office he will never resign, but will exercise forever and ever.[83] The other authority is that which is given him with reference to the covenant of redemption alone:

> The Spirit is put under the Son, or given to Him and committed to His disposal and dispensation, as the Father's vicegerent and ruling on His Father's throne; as the angels and the whole universe were given to him to dispose of as the Father's vicegerent. So that the Holy Spirit, 'till the work of redemption shall be finished, will continue to act under the Son, in some respects, with that subjection that is oeconomically due to the Father. For the Son will have the disposal of the Spirit in the name of the Father, or as ruling with His authority. This authority that the Son has over the Spirit, will be resigned at the end of the world, when He shall resign His vicarious dominion and authority, that God may be all in all, and that things thenceforward may be dispensed only according to the order of the Oeconomy of the Trinity.[84]

In another place Edwards provides a distinction between the representative kingdom over which the God-man rules by virtue of his representing man before God, and the mediatorial kingdom which Christ establishes through his redemptive work in bringing men before God. The latter he will surrender to the Father at the end when he surren-

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[83] Ibid., p. 50.

[84] Ibid., p. 48.

ders the Spirit; but the former, since he will always be true man, Christ will never relinquish. But this distinction does not require us to think of two kingdoms, but rather two ways in which Christ is related to man. He is always representative, but he is not always mediatorial. The two kingdoms become one when Christ need no longer act as mediator between man and God.

> When the end comes, that relation that Christ stands in to His church, as the Father's viceroy over her, shall cease, and shall be swallowed up in the relation of a vital and conjugal Head, or Head of influence and enjoyment; which is more natural and essential to the main ends and purposes of His union with them. . . . Christ, God-man, shall now no longer be instead of the Father to them; but, as I may express it, their head of their enjoyment of God; as it were the eye to receive the rays of divine glory and love for the whole body; and ear to hear the sweet expressions of His love; and the mouth to taste the sweetness, and feed on the delights of the enjoyment of God: the root of the whole tree, planted in God, to receive sap and nourishment for every branch.[85]

Here we can see how the covenant of redemption, which is a contractual arrangement exclusively within the trinity, will be realized: the Son, who is the word or idea of God, will be "spoken" or "made apparent" to man by means of the incarnation. When Christ the man becomes for the sinner the most apparent good then the covenant of redemption has been fulfilled because that man by properly understanding Christ has seized on God himself. But the most apparent good is not a category that applies only to the understanding; for the will, we must never forget, always <u>is</u> as the most apparent good is. Therefore, along with the

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[85] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 89.

covenant of redemption is the covenant of grace.

Whereas the covenant of redemption is between the Father and the Son within the trinity, the covenant of grace is between Christ and man within the church. As every covenant has a condition on the basis of which it may be considered fulfilled, the basic condition of the covenant of redemption "that God has made with Jesus Christ, as a public person, is all that Christ has done and suffered to procure redemption." But the condition of the covenant of grace, "Christ's covenant with His people, or of the marriage covenant between Him and man, is that they should close with Him and adhere to Him."[86] In the Boston Lecture Edwards identified closing with Christ as faith, but there he made no reference to the covenant. Here where he is putting together faith and the covenant he is understandably reluctant to say that faith is the condition of the covenant of grace, for "making faith a condition of life fills the mind with innumerable difficulties about faith and works, and how to distinguish them."[87] The danger, of course, is that one will come to think that the covenant between Christ and the soul must be preceded by faith if we call faith a condition. But, Edwards insists, as the great doctors of the faith have always insisted,

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[86]Ibid., p. 68.

[87]Ibid., p. 67.

> we can do nothing but only receive Christ and what He has done already. Salvation is not offered to us upon any condition, but freely and for nothing. We are to do nothing for it; we are only to take it. This taking and receiving is faith. . . . It is very improper to say that a covenant is made with men, any otherwise than in Christ; for there is a vast difference between a free offer and a covenant. The covenant was made with Christ, and in Him with His mystical body; and the condition of the covenant is Christ's perfect obedience and sufferings. And that, that is made to men is a free offer.[88]

There is nothing in man that can precede the covenant as a condition, for Christ has already done that. What Christ is giving us in our relationship with him is an already fulfilled covenant. The whole matter of the covenant, therefore, and the trinity as well, comes down to the unmediated confrontation of Christ and sinner.

Perry Miller thought that Edwards had abandoned the covenant scheme because it put arbitrary limitations on the unpredictable actions of God. Edwards did not abandon the covenant scheme at all. He made use of it, in fact, not to limit God or man, but to show that within the limitations of human experience the whole man, historical and finite as he is, is locked in a thrilling drama of wills with the whole of the divine being, eternal and infinite though he be. And because Edwards carried the covenant into the trinity itself, his doctrine of the trinity never drifted off into some quiet corner of his thought where the eternal sublimity of intra-trinitarian relations could be discussed without reference to the

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[88] Ibid., pp. 65f.

brutish impoverishment and corruption of the human heart. And because of the covenant we are never allowed to forget that in the battle of wills between God and man, there is a captain for both sides--the same captain, and it is to his role in the soul's warfare we must now turn.

C. Christ and Man: the Extra Nos

1. Christ's Human Authenticity

Coming down out of the misty heights of the doctrine of the trinity there are several elevated perspectives Edwards affords us on the historical Christ. We can see from this side of the incarnation how the second person of the trinity assumes human nature. It was because of

> the love of the Son of God to the human nature, that He desired a most near and close union with it,--something like the union in the Persons of the trinity; nearer than there can be between any two distinct creatures. This moved Him to make the human become one with Him, and Himself to be one of mankind that should represent all the rest.[89]

But what is the nature of this unity? Edwards wonders "whether or no the union of the divine with the human nature of Christ is not by the Spirit of the Logos dwelling in Him after a peculiar manner and without measure."[90] Then he suggests that the man Christ is united to the Logos in two ways:

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[89] Ibid., p. 72.

[90] Ibid., p. 90.

> 1. By the respect which God hath to this human nature. God hath respect to this man, and loveth Him as His own Son. This man hath communion with the Logos in the love which the Father hath to Him as His only begotten Son. Now the love of God is the Holy Ghost.
>
> 2. By what is inherent in this man, whereby He becomes one person with the Logos; which is only by the communion of understanding, and communion of will, inclination, spirit, or temper. It is not any communion of understanding and will that makes the same person; but the communion of understanding is such that there is the same consciousness.[91]

What becomes quickly apparent, as one hears Edwards work over these categories, is that he is more decisively informed by his own anthropological insights than by the long and complicated discussion of the orthodox divines on these questions--with which he was doubtlessly familiar.

Therefore, under the influence of his own knowledge of the human soul, Edwards' doctrine of the unio personalis, however brief, develops an interesting problem. Although he wants to maintain that the Spirit of the Logos dwells in Christ "after a peculiar manner and without measure," he has difficulty distinguishing Christ from other men. In one of his entries in the Miscellanies he tries to achieve uniqueness for Christ on the basis of a special consciousness.

> If the divine Logos speaks in & by the man X Jesus so that the man X Jesus in his speaking should say I say thus or thus & his human understanding is made use of by the Logos & it be the speech of his human understanding it must be by such a communication between the Logos and the human nature as to communicate consciousness.[92]

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[91] Ibid., p. 74.

[92] Yale MSS, No. 738.

But in the same entry from which Smyth took the above material, Edwards goes on to discuss the union of persons in such terms as to restrict the uniqueness of Christ's consciousness.

> The man Jesus becomes one person by a communion of knowledge and will but as in believers all divine knowledge is by the Spirit, tis by the Spirit that the knowledge of inspiration and prophecy is given & tis by the holy Ghost that the spiritual knowledge of all believers is given the Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God so I suppose tis by the Spirit that divine knowledge and consciousness is given to the man Jesus. & so as tis by the Spirit that a divine temper is given to men & angels so I suppose tis by the Spirit of the Logos that the man Jesus has the Spirit and temper of the only begotten Son of God.[93]

Since the divine knowledge which is synonymous with the Logos is communicated by the Spirit to Jesus just like it is to all other men, it hardly seems possible that it is by the categories of the orthodox christological discussion that the crucial role of Jesus can be delineated by Edwards. And, indeed, beyond these remarks his critical intelligence never goes. There are numerous entries in the Miscellanies dealing with the union of persons, but never in greater detail than the one from which Smyth has taken his material. And as for other traditional christological problems, references are either scant or non-existent. What happens to the doctrine of the offices of Christ we shall have a chance to examine in the final chapter, but here we may observe that the doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum

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[93] Ibid., No. 487.

is discussed directly only once in the thousands of pages of the miscellaneous notes, and, to the best of my knowledge, nowhere else in the entire Edwards corpus. And this one reference is but a paraphrase of Rawlin's treatment of the doctrine,which goes no farther itself than to indicate that the names and descriptions appropriate for each nature may be used of the whole person; as we sometimes use an expression appropriate to the physical appearance of a person to describe the whole person, such as "he is fair well proportioned, &c."[94]

Whatever it is that lies at the bottom of Edwards' conception of Christ--and this we hope to discover by the end of our study--it is clear from the brevity of his references to the traditional and orthodox christological categories that he does not think he can get at it by the use of them. The reason for this, as we have been suggesting, is that his teenage philosophical ruminations convinced him that this sort of theological exercise is without affectional fruit. It is evident on the face of it that Christ will not become one's most apparent good simply because he has been able to formulate a reasonably credible theory of, say, the Lord's ubiquitous presence. If we look now to see how Edwards does deal with the Christ who appears in the human nature, who is united to the Logos "only by the communion of understanding, and communion of will," we find that the emphasis is not on the union with

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[94] Ibid., No. 1219.

the Logos which sets Christ apart from man, but rather on the union which sets Christ in the midst of man; not on something unseen and metaphysical, but on something seen and ethical.

In his references to Christ's person, Edwards is characteristically concerned to establish his historical authenticity.

> Though Christ, as God, was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to his being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that he should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, he would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation; not from any imperfection of the divine nature, but by reason of its absolute and infinite perfection: for Christ, merely as God, was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of suffering; for it is infinitely above all suffering. Neither is it capable of obedience to that law that was given to man. It is as impossible that one who is only God should obey the law that was given to man, as it is that he should suffer man's punishment.[95]

Or, in other words, it was needful that God put himself entirely within the historical circumstances of man, in order that man's relationship with God might be restored without removing man from those historical circumstances in which that relationship was first destroyed. Therefore, whatever it is that Christ will do toward the purchase of our redemption, he must do it within the present limits of human existence.

> As nothing was done before Christ's incarnation, so nothing was done after his resurrection, to purchase redemption for men. Nor will there ever be any thing more done to all eternity. But that very moment that

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[95]"History of Redemption," Works, I, 396.

> the human nature of Christ ceased to remain under the power of death, the utmost farthing was paid of the price of the salvation of every one of the elect.[96]

Since "Christ's incarnation was a greater thing than had ever come to pass before,"[97] Edwards pushes hard on the scant biblical evidence to show that there were extraordinary historical circumstances surrounding the occasion of Christ's birth. He can see, for instance, the "fulness of time in which it was accomplished." It was not fitting for Christ to come before the flood because

> though the ground was cursed in great measure before, yet it pleased God that the curse should once, before the restoration by Christ, be executed in a universal destruction, as it were, of the very form of the earth, that the dire effects of the fall might once in such a way be seen before the recovery by Christ.[98]

And it "was not proper that Christ should come before the Babylonish captivity. For, before that, we have not histories of the state of the Heathen world, to give us an idea of the need of a Saviour."[99] Edwards finds it compelling to conclude from the biblical account that

> it was the will of God that his Son should make his appearance in the world in the time of this greatest and strongest monarchy, which was Satan's visible kingdom in the world; that, by overcoming this, he might visibly overcome Satan's kingdom in its greatest strength and glory, and so obtain the more complete triumph over Satan himself.[100]

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[96] Ibid., I, 396.

[97] Ibid., I, 399.

[98] Ibid., I, 397.

[99] Ibid., I, 398.

[100] Ibid., I, 398.

That Christ was born into circumstances that underscored the authenticity of his humanity, and at a time when the need for a saviour was particularly great, Edwards feels is made further evident in his being born to a poor virgin who was espoused to a poor man, both of whom were of the now broken house of David; so he was "born in a very low condition, even in a stable, and laid in a manger."[101]

However unimaginative, this hasty recapitulation of the biblical account may at least convince us that Christ's humaniorigin is, in Edwards' view, authentically historical. Therefore, like all men Jesus is to be understood in terms of his praiseworthiness and blameworthiness, or in terms of his <u>suffering</u> (to which all men are subjected due to their active participation in the sin of Adam) and <u>obedience</u> (which is still required of all men by virtue of their being <u>men</u>). It is at this point that the traditional doctrine makes a distinction between active and passive righteousness. For Edwards the key terms are rather the <u>satisfaction</u> which suffering provides, and the <u>merit</u> acquired through obedience. So when he states what is intended by "Christ's purchasing redemption," we learn

> there are two things that are intended by it, viz., his satisfaction, and his merit. All is done by the price that Christ lays down. But the price that Christ laid down does two things: it pays our debt, and so it <u>satisfies</u>: by its intrinsic value, and by the agreement between the Father and the Son, it procures a title to us for happiness, and so it merits. The

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[101] <u>Ibid</u>., I, 399.

> satisfaction of Christ is to free us from misery, and the merit of Christ is to purchase happiness for us.[102]

2. Satisfaction: The Price to be Paid

If we look to see how it is that Christ made satisfaction for our sin we look for "the sufferings and humiliation that he was the subject of. . . . on our account."[103] These begin with his infancy. "He was born to that end that he might die; and therefore he did as it were begin to die as soon as he was born. . . . He suffered in his birth, as though he had been meaner and viler than a man, and not possessed of the dignity of the human nature, but had been of the rank of the brute creatures." Then in his life as a carpenter, a "servile and obscure life, in a mean laborious occupation," he was the subject of a humiliation that "in some respects was greater in his private life than in the time of his public ministry." For the first thirty years of his life

> he spent among mean ordinary men, as it were in silence, without those manifestations of his glory, or any thing to make him to be taken notice of more than any ordinary mechanic, but only the spotless purity and eminent holiness of his life; and that was in great measure hid in obscurity; so that he was little taken notice of till after his baptism.[104]

But in his public life, "from his baptism till the night wherein he was betrayed," his humiliation was

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[102] Ibid., I, 401f.

[103] Ibid., I, 412.

[104] Ibid., I, 413.

of no common amount. Without a place to lay his head he was accustomed "to lodge abroad in the open air, for want of a shelter to betake himself to." Also he suffered great hatred and reproach.

> He was despised and rejected of men. He was by most esteemed a poor, insignificant person; one of little account, slighted for his low parentage, and his mean city Nazareth. . . . They excommunicated him, and agreed to excommunicate any man that should own him, as John ix. 22. They wished him dead, and were continually seeking to murder him; sometimes by force, and sometimes by craft. . . . He was thus hated and reproached by his own visible people: John i.11.[105]

Of course, it is in his last moments "from the evening of the night on which he was betrayed to his resurrection," that he underwent his "greatest humiliation and suffering, by which he principally made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of men." As Edwards recounts this story, familiar to his listeners in every detail, it seems to be the personal anguish of Christ, both physical and spiritual, that strikes him as the most significant d feature of the event.

> In those days crucifixion was the most tormenting kind of death by which any were wont to be executed. There was no death wherein the person expired so much of mere torment: and hence the Roman word which signifies torment, is taken from this kind of death. And besides what our Lord endured in this excruciating death in his body, he endured vastly more in his soul. Now was that travail of his soul, of which we read in the prophet; now it pleased God to bruise him, and to put him to grief; now he poured out his soul unto death, as in Isa. liii.[106]

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[105] Ibid., I, 413f.

[106] Ibid., I, 415f. Edwards is apparently aware that something in the death of Christ that likely not to be con-

When Anselm came to this place in his Cur Deus Homo he brings Boso through a discussion on the heinousness of sin against the person of Christ which Boso concludes with the remark, "A sin committed upon his person exceeds beyond comparison all the sins which can be thought of, that do not affect his person." "You say well," Anselm replied, "and hence we see that no enormity or multitude of sins, apart from the Divine person, can for a moment be compared with a bodily injury, inflicted on that man."[107] In Anselm's hands the issue becomes quantitative. Since a single sin against Christ far exceeds the total of all other sins, and since Christ will give his own life voluntarily he will give unto God that which is greater than all the offense ever made by man against God; Christ's death satisfies arithmetically. Edwards,

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vincing. Christ knew in the end that he would not suffer the fate of true sinners, and he therefore had the comfort of that knowledge which the sinner does not have. If we are looking for the affectional qualities of the death scene this would tend to make the crucifixion less a piece of genuine life experience for Christ than a colorful stage-prop with little true inner anguish. In one of his miscellaneous notes Edwards attempts to avoid this reading of the passion narrative with the comment that Christ in his death "had for the present lost infinitely more than the damned lost because his blessedness in the love and communion with God was infinitely greater. When a man has lost much his grief is greater than he who has lost but little though they are both become equally poor. . . ." Yale MSS, No. 265. The reader is inclined to agree that the point is important in Edwards' overall theological analysis of the crucifixion, but the argument is still more contrived than it is convincing. What Christ lost is only for "the present." This hardly makes up for the eternal torment of the damned.

[107] Op. cit., pp. 262f.

as we have seen, will not let the affair be settled outside the limits of the heart. It was necessary for Anselm to have the final exchange between the Son and the Father occur in man's absence. The Son appears before the Father with his surplus of merits; and since the Father needs nothing and can therefore receive no gifts from the Son, he returns the merits, that the son might dispose of them as he should see fit. And whom, Anselm concludes, "could be more justly made heirs of the inheritance, which he does not need, and of the superfluity of his possessions, than his parents and brethren?"[108]

Edwards moves this transaction out of the intra-trinitarian mysteries and puts it out where he can cause the heart to respond. But what is the response he thought he would get? What is it that appears in Edwards' Jesus? First, there is the recognition that what Christ suffered within his own historical existence is what each one of us, every human being, deserved according to his sinfulness. So we identify with him. There stand we but for the restraining grace of God which withholds that final wrath for a short time. But, second, Edwards obviously believes that by having suffered for us Christ has demonstrated his love for us and our response should therefore be one of love. In other words, to look at the Jesus Edwards has described, is not to be directed off to an event in an intraversable mythological distance, but it is, on the one hand, to be

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[108] Ibid., pp. 284f.

exposed to ourselves and the character of our lives and, on the other, to be presented with the way out of that condition. When Jesus suffered in this way he put himself in our stead;--by causing us to look upon him and see the penalty which we know we deserve;-he was acting as the second Adam. But, still, by such suffering

> the second Adam did only bring himself into the state that the first Adam was in on the first moment of his existence, viz., a state of mere freedom from guilt; and hereby indeed was free from any obligation to suffer punishment: but this being supposed there was need of something further, even a positive obedience, in order to his obtaining, as our second Adam, the reward of eternal life.[109]

Adam, Edwards reminds us, "was not to have the reward merely . . . on the account of his not having done ill, but on the account of his doing well."[110]

3. Obedience: The Prize to be Earned

How then does Edwards conceive the active obedience of Christ? First, we should recognise that it "was by the same things that Christ hath satisfied God's justice, and also purchased eternal happiness. This satisfaction and purchase of Christ were not only both carried on through the whole time of Christ's humiliation, but they were both carried onby the same things."[111] Christ's suffering, therefore, was incurred in the course of his obedience--

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[109]"Justification by Faith Alone," Works, IV, 93.

[110]Ibid., IV, 92f.

[111]"History of Redemption," Works, I, 403.

indeed, his suffering and his obedience refer to but one thing.

> Every command that Christ obeyed may be reduced to that great and everlasting law of God that is contained in the covenant of works, that eternal rule of right which God had established between himself and mankind. Christ came into the world to fulfill and answer the covenant of works; that is, the covenant that is to stand forever as a rule of judgment; and that is the covenant that we had broken, and that was the covenant that must be fulfilled.[112]

But the covenant can be broken down into more specific commands of God, and these are of three kinds. The first have to do with those commands to which Christ was subject merely as man: that is, the moral law, especially as it is contained in the decalog.[113] The second class contains those laws that Jesus was subject to as a Jew: the ceremonial law which he fulfilled with his circumcision. Then, for the third kind of law, Edwards adds an unusual notion: the mediatorial law. This law contains

> those commands of God to which he was subject not merely as man, nor yet as a Jew, but which related purely to his mediatorial office. Such were the commands which the Father gave him, to teach such doctrines, to preach the gospel, to work such miracles, to call such disciples, to appoint such ordinances, and finally to lay down his life: for he did all these things in obedience to commands he had received of the Father, as he often tells us. . . .And it is to be observed, that Christ's righteousness, by which he merited heaven for himself and all who believe in him, consists principally in his obedience to this mediatorial law; for in fulfilling this law consisted his chief work and business in the world.[114]

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[112] Ibid., I, 404.

[113] Ibid., I, 404f.

[114] Ibid., I, 405.

It is in connection with the mediatorial law that Christ is most properly to be understood as the second Adam, since it is under the mediatorial law that Christ repairs what was lost in Adam. Both Adam and Christ were public figures inasmuch as the historical consequences of their actions reach out to others. Adam's trespass had the effect of determining all subsequent human acts of the will toward sin. The connection between Adam and us is purely historical. As we have seen above our sinfulness cannot be ascribed to such factors as the innate perversion of the will, or a permanent, genetic distortion of the heart. Our sinfulness is learned. By the same account Christ's incarnation and work cannot be understood in transcendental or metaphysical terms; the connection between Christ and us must be just as historical as that between Adam and us. If Christ is going to work any change on our actual conduct in the world, he must do so through the only available categories: the human understanding and will. We have already seen that with his suffering we are caused to identify with him because we can see in him what we know to be our own <u>desert</u>. But how precisely will his obedience take us over into righteousness? It is not enough that he be merely obedient, but he must be obedient in a way that will excite us to obedience.

It is to draw our attention to Christ's distinctive though authentically human obedience that Edwards has

developed the category of Christ's mediatorial obedience. It is not a new kind of humanity that Christ possesses, but a new kind of law he has been given.

> As that act of disobedience by which we fell, was disobedience to a positive precept that Christ never was under, viz., that of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; so that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed, is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, viz., the precept of laying down his life.[115]

But this new kind of obedience cannot be properly or effectively seen unless it is projected against the historical background of Christ's life. Edwards distinguished between the private and the public life of Christ,[116] but in this brief account he did little with the private life. His chief interest is with the public life of which he observes four things. First, he notes the historical antecedent or forerunner to Christ's ministry--John the Baptist. John's ministry "consisted principally in preaching the law, to awaken men and convince them of sin, to prepare men for the coming of Christ, to comfort them, as the law is to prepare the heart for the entertainment of the gospel."[117] This is consistent with Edwards' notion that Christ cannot be properly understood outside the ethical dimensions of human experience--which is to say only that Christ cannot be understood except within the range of human experience.

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[115]"Justification by Faith Alone," Works, IV, 99.

[116]"History of Redemption," Works, I, 406.

[117]Ibid., I, 407.

Secondly, we are to note that Christ's entrance into the public ministry, after the baptism by John, is followed by the temptation in the wilderness. "Satan made a violent onset upon him at his first entrance on his work; and now he had a remarkable trial of his obedience; but he got the victory. He who had such success with the first Adam, had none with the second."[118] Not only is Christ within the ethical context, he is set sharply against the forces of this world for his righteousness is not that of the world's as long as the world is under the rule of Satan. Christ is an authentic member of the human community, but he is set radically against its present historical basis.

Then Edwards turns to a discussion of "the work in which Christ was employed during his ministry. Here are three things chiefly to be taken notice of, viz., his preaching, his working miracles, and his calling and appointing disciples and ministers of his kingdom."[119] It is interesting here that Edwards can even include Christ's teaching under "that obedience by which he purchased salvation for us," since he was "speaking those things which the Father commanded him." And what the Father had commanded is that Christ make known his will more clearly than anyone before. At the very center of Christ's ministry, then, is the communication of knowledge. His ministry

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[118] Ibid., I, 408.

[119] Ibid., I, 409.

to us begins with our understanding. As for miracles, he makes nothing of their supernatural character, or even their suprahistorical origin. He emphasizes rather that Christ performed them out of his mercy and on great multitudes, and that by doing so they became "images of the great work which he came to work on man's heart."[120] While his teaching was aimed at the understanding, his miracles were designed for the heart. The third thing with which Christ was employed during his ministry was the calling and sending of ministers.[121] Within Christ's life was begun that actual changing of lives that results from understanding the will of God and having the heart to follow him. The visible church is related historically to Christ's ministry.

Fourthly, Edwards draws our attention to the manner in which Christ finished his public ministry. Consistent with his Galilean ministry,he gave dying counsels to his disciples that they might continue his work. In addition to his "verbal signs" he gave "visible signs" in the sacrament which he instituted in order that we might have a "representation of his body broken, and of his blood shed." But the chief thing in the finishing up of his ministry is the offering up of his life as a sacrifice to God.

> This act he did as God's minister, as God's anointed priest; and it was the greatest act of his public

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[120] Ibid., I, 408f.

[121] Ibid., I, 409.

> ministry, the greatest act of his obedience by which he purchased heaven for believers. . . . Herein he was the antitype of all that had been done by all the priests, and in all their sacrifices and offerings, from the beginning of the world.[122]

Again we observe that his death is not the greatest act of his ministry because of its arithmetical significance, but rather because, on the one hand, it is the supreme demonstration of the suffering man deserves for his sinfulness, while, on the other, it is the culmination of all the positive obedience Christ undertook in his lifetime which Edwards has described generically as "laying down his life."

In addition to the laws which Christ obeyed and the historical setting for that obedience, there is still a third aspect to Edwards' conception of Christ's positive obedience.

> The third distribution of the acts by which Christ purchased redemption, regards the virtues that Christ exercised and manifested in them. And here I would observe, that Christ in doing the work that he had to do here in the world for our redemption, exercised every possible virtue and grace. . . . Every virtue in him was perfect. Virtue itself was greater than him than in any other; and it was under greater advantages to shine in him than in any other. Strict virtue shines most when most tried: but never any virtue had such trials as Christ's had.[123]

Edwards finds three sorts of virtue in Christ: First, those "virtues which more immediately respect God, appeared in Christ in the work that he did for our redemption." Secondly, Edwards finds that in "this work he most wonder-

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[122] Ibid., I, 409.

[123] Ibid., I, 409f.

fully manifested those virtues which more immediately respected himself; as particularly humility, patience, and contempt of the world. Christ, though he was the most excellent and honorable of all men, yet was the most humble; yea, he was the most humble of all creatures."[124] Finally,

> Christ, in the work which he wrought out, in a wonderful manner exercised those virtues which more immediately respect other men. And these may be summed up under two heads, viz., meakness and love.
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> Christ's meakness was his humble calmness of spirit under the provocations that he met with. . . . If we consider how much he was hated, what abuses he suffered from the vilest of men, how great his sufferings from men were, and how spiteful and how contemptuous they were, in offering him these abuses; and also consider how causeless and unreasonable these abuses were, how undeserving he was of them, and how much deserving of the contrary, viz., of love, and honor, and good treatment at their hands: I say, if we consider these things, no man ever met with a thousandth part of the provocation that Christ met with from men: and yet how meek was he under all! How composed and quiet his spirit.[125]
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> And never did there appear such an instance of love to men. Christ's love to men that he showed on earth, and especially in going through his last sufferings, and offering up his life and soul under those sufferings, which was his greatest act of love, was far beyond all parallel.[126]

4. Christ's Apparent Righteousness

Here then is the righteousness of Christ as it was wrought out in his human nature: first our attention has been directed to his suffering by which he both demon-

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[124] Ibid., I, 410.

[125] Ibid., I, 411.

[126] Ibid., I, 412.

strates the authenticity of his membership in the human community and causes us to identify with him, to see in his misfortune that suffering which is due us for our own sinful conduct. But Christ's suffering does not actually purchase heaven for us; it only prepares us for the purchase. The purchase is left to the positive righteousness. We have given most of the details of Edwards' account of Christ's positive righteousness in the History of Redemption, and we have seen that his coverage of the Galilean section of Christ's life is scant, but, on the other hand, it is quite clear how he wants us to understand the life and death of Christ as it is recorded by scripture. What we learn chiefly from Edwards is that the positive righteousness by which heaven is purchased is not itself done by Christ in our absence. Not once will he let the narrative of Christ's work take us outside our own experience to an event either in the historical or the metaphysical past.

The important thing about Christ's ministry is not that he loved and was meek, not merely that he told us what the will of God was, not that he was capable of performing miracles, but that in all of these activities there was displayed a certain kind of "excellency." Note, for example, the phraseology in Edwards' discussion of the virtues, quoted above; Christ's virtues were said to "shine" in him more than in any other; the virtues which respected God "appeared in Christ in the work that he did for our

redemption;" the virtues respecting himself "he most wonderfully manifested."[127] And then there was his remark that "never did there appear such an instance of love to men."[128] Edwards is concerned here with what strikes the eye or the understanding; he is concerned with that which is most apparent in Christ. Christ's righteousness, in other words, is an apparent righteousness. This is not to say, of course, that it is apparent as opposed to real. Just as Edwards saw the folly of trying, like John Locke, to go behind the appearance to the substance, he thinks it worthless here to go behind that which appears in Christ to look at the real thing. But this is not just because it is impossible; it is also because it is of the nature of righteousness that it be apparent, that it manifest itself. Christ's righteousness is not merely a dull enactment of the laws, but it is a showing forth of that glory of the lawgiver. And, as we shall see, it is also of the essence of the righteousness of the saint that it be an apparent righteousness, that the saint become, as it were, "a little sun." It is because of the apparent nature or righteousness that Edwards decides vigorously to revive the doctrine of the visibility of sainthood.

In the meantime, we must observe that our case for this understanding of righteousness need not rest on these rather lifeless passages from the History of Redemption.

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[127] Ibid., I, 410. Italics mine.

[128] Ibid., I, 412. Italics mine.

In a sermon preached in 1734 he made use of the same kind of contrasts he described in the History; particularly when he set Christ's meekness over against the many provocations to anger. But the sermon accomplishes this with much greater effectiveness. The text for "The Excellency of Christ" is Revelation 5:5f. which combines the metaphors of the lion and the lamb. With the freedom of interpretation which this book of the bible invites, Edwards says that these two terms are appellations of Christ. Since this allows him to say that the two terms are applicable at the same time, he can then propose as his doctrine for this discourse that "there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ."

> The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures, yet have each their peculiar excellencies. The lion excels in strength, and in the majesty of his voice: the lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our clothing, and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both; because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in him.[129]

But then Edwards distinguishes between that conjunction of excellencies appropriate to his person and that conjunction of excellencies appropriate to his acts. Within his person there are three sorts of conjunctions. First, "there is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another."

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[129] "The Excellency of Christ," Works, IV, 180.

another."[130]

> Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of the earth: for he is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is higher than the highest angels of heaven. . . . And yet he is one of infinite condenscension. None are so low or inferior, but Christ's condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. . . . His condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have infinite ill deservings. . . . it is great enough to take their nature upon him, to become one of them, that he may be one with them: yea, it is great enough to abase himself yet lower for them, even to expose himself to shame and spitting; yea, to yield up himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater?[131]

Under this category belongs also the conjunction of Christ's infinite justice and infinite grace, these being quite diverse to human imaginings.[132]

Secondly, within Christ's person is a "conjunction of such really diverse excellencies, as otherwise would h have seemed to us utterly impompatible in the same subject."[133] Thus he is both majestic and meek.

> It is he that is terrible out of his holy places; who is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea; before whom a fire goeth, and burneth up his enemies round about. . . . And yet he was the most marvelous instance of meekness, and humble quietness of spirit, that ever was; agreeable to the prophecies of him. . . . Thus was Christ a lion in majesty, and a lamb in slaughter.[134]

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[130] Ibid., IV, 180.

[131] Ibid., IV, 180.

[132] Ibid., IV, 181.

[133] Ibid., IV, 181f.

[134] Ibid., IV, 183.

And, thirdly, there are excellencies "expressed in him towards men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised toward the same object; as particularly these three, justice, mercy, and truth."[135]

When Edwards turns his attention in this sermon to the excellencies in the acts of Christ he teeters dangerously on the edge of a serious inconsistency, but doing so he has given us a penetrating view of one of the peculiarities of the Reformed understanding of Christ. "Though Christ dwelt on the earth in mean outward circumstances, whereby his condescension and humility especially appeared, and his majesty was veiled;" he reasons, "yet his divine dignity and glory did, in many of his acts, shine through the veil, and it illustriously appeared, that he was not only the Son of man, but the great God." Is Edwards about to say here that the Christ of the gospels is not, after all, authentically human, but rather part human and part divine, or perhaps even docetically human? There are several sentences here that strongly give that impression. After saying that Christ's "marvellous humility and meekness was manifested, in his choosing to appear in such mean outward circumstances, and in being so contented in them, when he was so ppor that he had not where to lay his head," he adds dangerously:

> And yet he at the same time did many ways show forth his divine majesty and glory, particularly in the miracles that he wrought, which were evidently divine

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[135] Ibid., IV, 185.

> works, and manifested omnipotent power, and so declared him to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His wonderful and miraculous works plainly showed him to be the God of nature; in that it appeared by them that he had all nature in his hands, and could lay an arrest upon it, and stop, and change its course as he pleased.[136]

Heretofore, Edwards has held the range of our vision to the humanity of Christ; he has caused us to think that what Christ was and what he did was within the definable limits of human experience. Now he wants to tear the veil of humanity back and show the divine underneath.

This apparent inconsistency brings us before one of the more distinctive and yet difficult themes of Reformed christology. From the beginning, in the earliest writings of Zwingli, the Reformed divines held that the humanity of Christ remained intact from the incarnation on through eternity. Calvin insisted that at the ascension, where Christ was carried up into heaven, he withdrew his body from our sight, "his body was raised up above all the heavens."[137] Calvin meant, of course, Christ's physically circumscribed, historical body. Edwards writings are most explicit on this point as we shall see in the last chapter, and references to the physical resurrection and absence of Christ are frequent. In his sermon at the funeral of David Brainerd he sought to find solace both for himself and his congregation in the thought that

> the human nature of Christ is yet in being. He still continues, and will continue to all eternity, to be

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[136] Ibid., IV, 187.

[137] Institutes, II, xvi, 14.

> both God and man. His whole human nature remains: not only his human soul, but also his human body: His dead body rose from the dead; and the same that was raised from the dead, is exalted and glorified at God's right hand; that which was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore. And therefore there is a certain place, a particular part of the external creation, to which Christ is gone, and where he remains.[138]

The significant point in this for our discussion is that for Edwards, just as for Calvin,[139] Christ, having gone thither in his physical body, nonetheless rules heaven and earth and at the end he will descend in his visible body and undertake the judgment.[140] Here, then, is the strange yet suggestive Reformed teaching: not that the humanity of Christ spills over itself and breaks its natural limits in order to acquire power restricted to the divine, but that at the very center of the Godhead, in the eye of the blazing sun, there is a human being like us who has an understanding and a will like ours. More precisely, all of the power of the majesty of the great God is contained within the humanity of the man Christ. Therefore, when Christ so acts in his earthly ministry that we are led to see that "he was the God that framed the eye, and created the ear, and was the author of the frame of man's body," we need not suppose that he is doing anything contradictory to his humanity. The acts of Christ

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[138] "When Saints Are Absent," Works, III, 625.

[139] Institutes, II, xvi, 15,17 et passim.

[140] Cf., Edwards' picture of Christ's changing roles, "Concerning the Endless Punishment of Those Who Die Impenitent," Works, I, 625ff.

that brought us to that conclusion are his "healing the sick, and opening the eyes of the blind, and unstopping the ears of the deaf, and healing the lame."[141]

If we hold Edwards to his understanding of miracles, examined briefly above, then we are asked to behold in Christ not something the human eye cannot see, but something the eye never sees: one man perfectly loving another. Although his love had the style of the lamb by his willingness to lay down his life for his friends, it had the power of the lion. But if his great love led us to see in him the creator God, his contempt for those who refused to love leads us to call him Judge: "he was also wont to appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, with divine authority and majesty, in his so sharply rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees, and other hypocrites."[142]

We have been trying to determine whether, in the course of the description of the historical Christ, Edwards has not made so free a use of the contrasts in Christ that he has taken us outside the bounds of his humanity. But we have found that the opposite is true--it is what happens within the limits of Christ's humanity that gives definition to the divinity. That this is the case becomes further evident in "The Excellency of Christ." The third category under the acts of Christ deals with "his offering up himself a sacrifice for sinners in his last sufferings.

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[141]"Excellency of Christ," Works, IV, 187.

[142]Ibid., IV, 188.

As this was the greatest thing in all the work of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work, so in this act especially does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies that has been spoken of." It is probably here, where we tread that well-worn ground of the arrest, trial and crucifixion narrative, that we most clearly see this distinctive aspect to Edwards' understanding of Christ. First, he sets the humiliation of Christ's last sufferings in contrast with his exaltation in the midst of them.

> Never was he subject to such ignominy as then; never did he suffer so much pain in his body, or so much sorrow in his soul; hever was he in so great an exercise of his condescension, humility, meekness, and patience, as he was in these last sufferings; never was his divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did he so empty himself, and make himself of no reputation, as at this time; and yet never was his divine glory so manifested by any act of his, as in that act of yielding himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it to be unfolded in the issue of it, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever he exercised towards the creature.[143]

Then he explains that this is the supreme manifestation of Christ's love for God (since he was utterly obedient to God) and his love for man at the same time (since by his obedience to God he suffered the penalty due man.) This sets in contrast his infinite love for God and his infinite love for God's enemies.[144] Again, Edwards sets the blazing innocence of Christ in contrast with the way

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[143] Ibid., IV, 188.

[144] Ibid., IV, 189.

he was treated before his crucifixion: "as if he had been the worst and vilest of mankind; and then he was put to a kind of death, that none but the worst sort of malefactors were wont to suffer, those that were most abject in their persons, and guilty of the blackest crimes."[145]

In still another sharp contrast Edwards can argue that

> Christ in his last sufferings suffered most extremely from those that he was then in his greatest act of love to. He never suffered so much from his Father (though not from any hatred to him, but from hatred to our sins), for he then forsook him (as Christ on the cross expresses it). . . . yet he never gave so great a manifestation of love to God as then, as has already been observed.[146]

There are numerous entries in the Miscellanies that deal with this feature of Christ's death. In one, after repeating that his dying upon the cross was the most "wonderfull act of love that ever was," Edwards goes on to say that "the posture that he died in, was very suitable to signify his free and great [love] he died with his arms spread open as being ready to embrace all that would come to him."[147]

We learned in this chapter that it is of the essence of righteousness that it be apparent righteousness, that it be manifested and shone abroad. We had learned earlier that Christ and man could meet only within the range of man's understanding and experience. This made it

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[145] Ibid., IV, 190.

[146] Ibid., IV, 190.

[147] Yale MSS, No. 304.

necessary for Edwards to find a way of making Christ's righteousness apparent in his interpretation of scripture. We found that the most successful method for Edwards was setting Christ off in contrast against his background. It is this contrast--his love matched against the hatred of him, etc.--which constitutes his excellency. It is not, as we thought for a moment, his divinity alone that constitutes his excellency. It is a human excellency, but one uniquely designed to call forth our respect and love for God.

> Though his human excellencies are but communications and reflections of his divine; and though this light, as reflected, falls infinitely short of the divine fountain of light in its immediate glory; yet the reflection shines not without its proper advantages, as presented to our view and affections. As the glory of Christ appears in the qualifications of his human nature, it appears to us in excellencies that are of our own kind, that are exercised in our own way and manner, and so, in some respects, are peculiarly fitted to invite our acquaintance and draw our attention.[148]

It is Edwards, and not I, who put this passage into italics. It was he who wanted to give this point special emphasis. It causes us to see that his writings are abundant in material designed to make Christ appear vividly to our affections. Even the imprecatory sermons can be understood within this design, for it is their function, as we shall see in greater detail below, to call men to an ethical seriousness in order that they might be able to see in Christ their most apparent good. In

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[148] "Excellency of Christ," Works, IV, 198.

another of his more famous sermons, "The Wisdom of God Displayed in the Way of Salvation," Edwards draws out the themes customarily discussed under the topic of the redemption, but he does so not merely to poke around in their contents--he wants always to find what is displayed by those doctrines. The contrast here is achieved by setting human wisdom over against divine wisdom. For example, the wonderful wisdom of God appears when we see

> that our good should be procured by such seemingly unlikely and opposite means, as the humiliation of the Son of God. When Christ was about to undertake that great work of redemption, he did not take that method that any creature-wisdom would have thought the most proper. Creature-wisdom would have determined that in order to his effectually and more gloriously accomplishing such a great work, he should rather have been exalted higher, if it had been possible, rather than humbled so low.[149]

Here it is not to the fact of the incarnation that Edwards is directing our attention, but to the wisdom that lay behind it. He is not seeking to enlarge our information but to ignite our astonishment and wonder.

It is on the basis of the contrasts so richly woven through the work of redemption, and therefore its overall excellency, that Edwards is compelled several times to regard that a far greater work than the creation. In the creation God brought man out of nothing into something. But in the redemption he brought man from less than nothing--opposition to God--into glory. For this reason, even the ancient O felix culpa! can be heard to ring in Edwards' work.

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[149] "The Wisdom of God," Works, IV, 152.

> By this contrivance for our redemption, God's greatest dishonor is made an occasion of his greatest glory. Sin is a thing by which God is greatly dishonored; the nature of its principle is enmity against God, and contempt of him. And man, by his rebellion, has greatly dishonored God. But this dishonor, by the contrivance of our redemption, is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's glory that ever was. Sin, the greatest evil, is made an occasion of the greatest good.[150]

In words not yet published this same notion is put with still greater clarity. The reason death first took Christ is

> that redemption of X from death should be the more visible remarkeable & glorious. that he should not deliver man by preventing the evil but that the evil should first actually be that power and sufficiency of the Redeemer in redeeming may be the more conspicuous & glorious & his grace therein the more taken notice of.[151]

And, in the Religious Affections, after describing how the "glory and beauty of the blessed Jehovah. . . . appears shining in all its luster, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer,"[152] Edwards concludes:

> So has God disposed things, in the affair of the redemption, and in his glorious dispensations, revealed to us in the gospel, as though everything were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest, possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most sensibly and strongly. How great cause have we therefore to be humbled to the dust, that we are no more affected.[153]

Edwards takes us through these theological cate-

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[150] Ibid., IV, 149.

[151] Miscellanies, Yale MSS, No. 608.

[152] Religious Affections, p. 123.

[153] Ibid., p. 124.

gories as though he were a merchant of ideas, and pausing with each of his conceptual wares he turns them about, holding them to the light and drawing our attention to their most striking features; then he passes on to another, and another, appealing always to our heart by means of our understanding. There is little in Edwards' writing that resembles the dull cataloging of the stock-boy; the mere contents of faith are uninteresting to him, except insofar as one can perceive their beauty or their excellency, and insofar as he is affected by them. There is a passage in the Religious Affections that states this with such force and clarity it should be quoted at length. It is only by the sense of the moral beauty of divine things, Edwards says, that we can understand

> the sufficiency of Christ as a mediator: for 'tis only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfection of Christ, that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his person, so as to know anything more of it than the devils do: and 'tis only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, that any know his sufficiency as a mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. 'Tis by seeing the excellency of Christ's person, that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin: for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that 'tis the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. . . . He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fullness of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen, that is worth the seeing: for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood, that is worthy of the noble faculty of understanding. This

> is the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of Divinity (if I may so speak), the good of the infinite Fountain of Good; without which God himself (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite evil: without which, we ourselves had better never have been; and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this: his knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or the form of knowledge, as the Apostle calls it.[154]

5. Conclusion

The doctinal skeleton that gives the general shape to this section of Edwards' understanding of righteousness is that provided by the Westminster Confession. There it is God's justice, as it functions independently of his love, which must be satisfied by Christ's sacrifice, thereby making possible the purchase of heaven by his obedience.[155] And if we had held our examination of Edwards' treatment of this theme to the spare, unfinished contents of the History of Redemption, then we might feel we had isolated a relatively simple doctrine of the atonement; simple, that is, in relation to that which follows in the work of his students and successors.[156]

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[154] Ibid., pp. 273f.

[155] Cf., Schaff, III, 621.

[156] Beginning with Bellamy who had studied with Edwards at Northampton the concept of justice underwent modification. Following a suggestion advanced by Grotius in his refutation of Socinus, justice and love were not seen as independently functioning attributes of God, the one in conflict with the other. Rather both were brought together in the concept of God's moral government. God's rectoral justice, under this understanding, was not the

But it should be apparent by now that the doctrine of the atonement as such never gets isolated treatment in Edwards' work, and to speak of his theory of the atonement as the term was both earlier and subsequently understood is to speak of something he never formulated for independent statement and defense. If the concept of justice that informed the Westminster Divines is still implicit in Edwards' talk about satisfaction, it is not because he wanted us to think that the "sovereignty of the Creator is a sponge which wipes out all and costs nothing--nothing but the misery of a human being,"[157] but because he thought by appealing to a notion generally held he could the more brightly exercise the affections. We must not tire of arguing that Edwards was reaching out toward our wills through our understanding; he wanted men to change the actual conduct of their lives. He did not want to construct a doctrine that could be pondered quietly and then when

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severe and inflexible attribute which the New England divines felt had been left them in Edwards, but managed through distinctions in the nature of justice to show, for example, that when God cast sinners into the eternal conflagration his designs were ultimately in the cause of love and were not the mechanical reactions of the "offended Deity." Christ, in this conception, becomes the means by which the attributes of God are reconciled. It is evident that Edwards was much more concerned to direct our attention to Christ himself. For a more complete account of the "New England theory" of the atonement, cf., F. H. Foster, A Genetic History of the New England Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907); E. A. Park, The Atonement (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1859).

[157]Oliver W. Holmes, "Jonathan Edwards," Major American Writers, ed. Jones, Leisy and Ludwig (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1935), Vol. I, 859.

found inoffensive could be abandoned without concern precisely because it was inoffensive. He wanted a doctrine that would bring men's wills to attention and their minds to a sharp focus, because he had in the apparent Christ what he thought was a great plenty for the mind and a mighty captain for the heart. No doubt this piece of his thought would have to be rewritten to achieve its effect in our day, but it need not for that reason be misread.

D. Christ and Man: the Pro Nobis

Finally, under the head of Christ's righteousness we must take account of the fact that Christ was made righteousness unto us. "The silk-worm is a remarkeable type of Christ," Edwards mused in his private writings,

> which when it dies yields us that of which we make such glorious clothing. Christ became a worm for our sakes, and by his death kindled that righteousness with which believers are clothed, and thereby procured that we should be clothed with robes of glory.[158]

How is it, then, that we become "clothed" with Christ's righteousness? We recall that Christ's own righteousness consisted of his sufferings, on the one hand, by which he took on himself the consequences of our sins, and his obedience, on the other, by which he performed those things we are obliged to do. Both Christ's suffering and his

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[158] Images or Shadows of Divine Things, ed. Perry Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), No. 35.

obedience were undertaken within the range of identifiable human experience. But, as we also learned, the significance of Christ's suffering and obedience lies not in the mere fact that they were undertaken by him, but rather that in the course of his life he manifested an extraordinary excellency by which the glory of God itself was displayed. Christ's righteousness, we learned, is an apparent righteousness. It is significant only insofar as it is seen. It is a righteousness that can be thought of only as it is for others.

One of the most prominent concepts in the traditional discussion of Christ's righteousness, and the one which had captured the mind of post-Reformation orthodoxy, is "satisfaction." It is Anselm who contributed this concept to the theological discussion, and when Edwards came round to his own consideration of it he began with the standard Anselmic themes. As surely as if Boso, Anselm's interlocutor, had his ear, Edwards intones the first sentence of his essay on satisfaction: "Justice requires that sin be punished, because sin deserves punishment."[159] But sin against God is no small matter. Because God is infinite, sin is infinite; therefore, "it will follow that it is requisite that God should punish all sin with infinite punishment. . . . unless there be something in some measure, to balance the desert; either some answerable

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[159]"Concerning the Necessity and Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin," Works, I, 582.

repentance and sorrow for it, or other compensation." But that, unfortunately, is impossible, for "there can be no infinite sorrow for sin in finite creatures; yea, there can be none but what is infinitely short of it; none that bears any proportion to it." And yet it cannot be denied that if sin is to be punished it is men that deserve the punishment, for "a fault cannot be properly said to deserve punishment from any, but those to whom it belongs to inflict punishment when it is deserved."[160] Shall we then appeal to God to forgive those who have sinned against him, knowing that when the measure of his punishment is served there will be none remaining who could obey? No. "Dispensing with the law by the lawgiver, so as not to fulfil it or execute it, in its nature does not differ from an abrogation of it,"[161] Edwards argues, presenting the case in all its Anselmic purity.

But he is by no means intending simply to reproduce Anselm. This sequence of propositions concerning the relation between sinful man and a just God grows quite naturally out of pieces of Edwards' thought which we have already examined. We saw in the first chapter that is was impossible for Edwards to release either God or man from history. God is immediately engaged in every event that ever has happened or ever will; and man, since the chain of determinacy between his experience of the world and his

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[160] Ibid., I, 584.

[161] Ibid., I, 588.

own willful relation to it has no missing link, is confined to his finite and now sinful existence. The dilemma in the relation between man and God must therefore be resolved within the limits of human experience. This is why the resemblance between Edwards and Anselm ends here. Anselm had to invent a non-historical happening between the Father and the Son in which the exchange of merits was made. Edwards' understanding of the doctrine of satisfaction forks off here in an entirely different direction. He shifts the metaphor from that of the quantitative debt to that of the sacrificial friend. If someone who was dependent on you and had all his good from you should abuse you without restraint, you would find it extremely difficult not to punish him appropriately for his actions, Edwards thought.

> But if any person that was a much dearer friend to me, and one that had always been true to me, and constant to the utmost, and that was a very near relation of him that offended me, should intercede for him, and, out of the entire love he had to him, should put himself to very hard labors and difficulties, and should undergo great pains and miseries to procure him forgiveness; and the person that had offended should, with a changed mind, fly to this mediator, and should seek favor in his name, with a sense in his own mind how much this mediator had done and suffered for him; I should be satisfied, and feel myself inclined, without any difficulty, to receive him into my entire friendship again; but not without the last mentioned condition, that he should be sensible how much his mediator had done and suffered. For if he was ignorant of it, or thought he had done only some small matter, I should not be easy nor satisfied. So a sense of Christ's sufficiency seems necessary in faith.[162]

The remainder of this essay is essentially an

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[162] Ibid., I, 593.

development of this statement. And as we watch Edwards taking each article out for particular attention, we recognise themes that come from many other quarters of his thought, and we soon realise that this statement does not just summarize his thoughts on one doctrine, but draws into a single focus the most distinctive themes of Edwards' theology.

First, he proposes several definitions by which the ensuing essay will proceed. The three key terms are "merit," "patron," and "client."

> By merit, in this discourse, I mean any thing whatsoever in any person or being, or about him or belonging to him, which appearing in the view of another is a recommendation of him to that other's regard, esteem or affection.

This definition should not be allowed to pass without noting how this alters what might have been considered the traditional meaning of this word in the doctrine of satisfaction. "Merit" there surely referred to the actual quantitative possession of the person, an amount earned by good behavior. Edwards is providing an exact reversal of this understanding of merit, and in case the reader doubts that he adds immediately:

> I do not at present take into consideration, whether that which thus recommends be real merit, or something that truly, according to the nature of things, is worthy to induce esteem, &c.; but only what actually recommends and appears worthy in the eye of him to whom it recommends the other.[163]

Here Edwards is bracketing out of the theological dis-

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[163] Ibid., I, 595.

cussion the real merit of Christ, and will concern himself only with that which strikes the eye of the man in the pew, or in the street. Edwards will not attempt a metaphysical flight backwards into the time of Christ to determine whether there truly be actual merit there, to acertain whether this actually be the Son of God who suffered and obeyed in our place, for he knows that in the written and preached word there is all we need to know.

His definitions of "patron" and "client" are without any supprises:

> By patron, I mean a person of superior dignity or merit, that stands for and espouses the interest of another, interposes between him and a third person or party, in that capacity to maintain, secure, or promote the interest of that other by his influence with the third person, improving his merit with him, or interest in his esteem and regard for that end. And by client, I mean that other person whose interest the patron thus espouses, and in this manner endeavors to maintain and promote.

The basic principle on which Edwards designs this discourse is the reasonable assumption that "respect should be shown to one on account of his relation to or union and connection with another," in which case it would be a respect one would not merit by himself outside the union with the other. And when one is viewed as having the merit of another, it may be said that that merit is "imputed" to him.[164] From this it would follow "that the greater or nearer that relation is, and the stricter the union, so much the more does it prevail for the acceptance

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[164] Ibid., I, 595.

of the person, or the object of respect, for the sake of him to whom he is united."[165] Now this union may be so close that the two may be looked upon as one. This will especially be the case if

> the way in which the patron expresses his desire of the client's welfare, that he is closely united to, and in which he seeks it, is by suffering and being at expense of his own personal and private welfare in any degree, for the welfare of the client. . . . The good of the price is parted with, for the good the things purchased; and therefore, here is a proper substitution of one in the place of another.[166]

Now when the patron appeals for the welfare of the client to someone who has high esteem for the patron, it is evident that he to whom the appeal is made should be ready to grant the welfare to the client for the sake of him who has suffered on the client's behalf. The likelihood of this is made still greater

> if the patron puts himself in the place of that client, undertaking to appear for him, to represent him, and act in his stead by an exceeding great change in his circumstances, clothes himself with the form of his client, goes where he is, takes his place in the universe, puts himself into his circumstances, and is in all things made like unto him, wherein this may be consistent with maintaining his merit inviolable.[167]

When the patron has made himself one with the client, and when the patron's friend regards them as one and regards the client's welfare as he regards the patron's, "then such a union may most fitly and aptly be represented, by the

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[165] Ibid., I, 596.

[166] Ibid., I, 597.

[167] Ibid., I, 598.

client's being taken by the patron to be as a part or member of himself, as though he were a member of his body."[168]

So far the account deals exclusively with the role the patron takes in this affair, but Edwards feels that "according to the nature of things" there is still one more requirement,

> which is this, that seeing the client is an intelligent being, capable of act and choice, he should therefore actively and cordially concur in the affair; that the union between the patron and him should be mutual; that as the patron's heart is united to the client, so the client's heart should be united to the patron. . . . there must also appear in the client those dispositions and acts that are proper to the character and relation of a client, cleaving to him, committing his cause to him, and trusting in him, in an entire approbation of the patron's friendship. . . . or, in one word, a cordial and entire faith of the client in his patron.[169]

Above, we noted that inasmuch as the righteousness of Christ was an apparent righteousness, it was without significance unless it be seen. So when Edwards calls for the cordial and entire faith of the client in his patron "according to the nature of things" he is only responding to his own teaching on the nature of the soul; for it was Edwards who taught us that the will is as the most apparent good is. And if Christ will display his affection for the sinner by suffering the torment which is due the sinner and then manifesting that obedience which is required of

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[168] Ibid., I, 600.

[169] Ibid., I, 601.

the sinner, the sinner cannot but respond, if and when Christ does become for him the most apparent good, with his own obedience. "All the vertue that X exercised in the human nature in any respect," Edwards wrote in his private notebook, "belongs to that righteousness which is imputed to believers for their justification."[170] But the obedience of Christ, the virtue he exercised in his human nature, is not mere duty to some vague categorcal imperative written across the soul of every man. The obedience of Christ is comprehended in that law which he, as the second Adam, was especially placed under: laying down his life for others. Christ's apparent righteousness is an act of suffering in the sinner's place, and it is an act of love toward the sinner. The sinner, in other words, does not love Christ because of Christ's abstract goodness; he loves Christ because Christ loves him.

E. Conclusion

To investigate Edwards' understanding of "righteousness" is to be brought before the vast drama of man's rebellion against God and God's move to reconcile himself with man. The drama begins with the helpless creature permanently fixed in the earth of history looking upward at the source of his life and being, blazing above him in

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[170] Miscellanies, Yale MSS, No. 791.

perfect freedom. Then the creature turned away from the sun and attempted to organize his existence and his society according to his own light. But his own light was so feeble as to be non-existent, and he fractured the order established by the creator. Next we learn that the utterly free God will not pass on to other universes, but will continue to express that same creative will. The drama, as Edwards writes it, pitches both God and man onto the stage of history.

But then there is a scene played in the wings, and it seems for a moment as if Edwards might seek to settle the whole affair out of the observer's view, as if there might be some invisible, secret compact that only the writer of the drama knows. But, no, we learn that everything that happens within the eternal council of the trinity must be apparent on the stage; we learn that there is nothing in the actions off stage of any significance except as it becomes visible on stage, before the lights of the finite minds looking on.

The drama of righteousness between God and man is then centered on Christ. Christ must make apparent what God's will is by performing it. But he must perform it in such a way that we are moved to perform it also. On the stage of human history Christ appears, so Edwards thought, with an extraordinary excellency in his person and in his acts. His excellency consists a balanced contrast between himself and his background. When the stage seems

to be dominated by the confident willfulness of proud actors, we find Christ in their midst clothed in the misery of those who are treated unjustly and are despised by the strong. When the lights go out and only the dark figures of grief and despair move before the eye, his presence is one of brilliant swiftness bringing hope to those who have no ground for hope. To the guilty he is forgiveness, to the innocent he is a shield, and to the corrupt he is judgment. To those who settle lethargically into their lives,foolishly certain of their immunity to personal disaster, he is the startling reminder of death. For those who see nothing before them but the unknown terrors of the void, he is the promise of victory.

This is the righteousness of the Christ who appeared before us in history. It is not a righteousness that consists in his mere performance of legal duties; it is rather a righteousness understood as the means by which God attempts to become our most apparent good.

We must now hear Edwards tell this same drama from the perspective of the observer. How shall we describe that man whose most apparent good is Christ? What is it he will do when his reason for doing it is Christ? In the terminology of conventional theological discussion, it is the answer to this question that constitutes what is called "sanctification."

CHAPTER IV

MADE UNTO US SANCTIFICATION

When Edwards turned to the discussion of sanctification in the Boston lecture, his initial survey of the subject was the remark that "it is by Christ that we have sanctification: we have in him true excellency of heart as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent, as well as imputed righteousness." From what we have so far examined in Edwards' thought we should have some comprehension of what he means with the claim that we have in Christ excellency of heart and understanding. These are the by now familiar categories around which Edwards' understanding of man rotates. But what precisely is intended by the second distinction? A few pages later he will draw the same distinction, but this time it will be done in terms of our "inherent good" and our "objective good." It is essential for a correct reading of Edwards to ascertain what these terms are designed to distinguish.

How easily they can be misconstrued is evident in Perry Miller's study of Edwards. Miller's entire approach rests on his taking the "inherent good" and the "objective good" to be "a dual series of reflections, often intermingled but not yet synthesized. The one proceeds out of

Locke and becomes what posterity has called his 'idealism'; the other begins with Newton and becomes what has been less widely appreciated, his naturalism."[1] Under the inherent good Miller finds Edwards developing his remarkably durable teachings on the nature of the soul. With this there can be little quarrel. However, the notion that under the objective good Edwards was applying to theology those insights learned from his "inspired reading of Newton,"[2] must be challenged. There is certainly no doubt that Edwards had read Newton, and had read him with great enthusiasm.[3] We have already seen how, in the doctrine of creation, Edwards could apply the Newtonian understanding of cause with great skill to an ancient teaching. But the objective good does not refer to the world in Edwards' use of the term; it refers to the drama of righteousness as we described it in the previous chapter. By objective good he means all that good which "we have in Christ." He means that good which is set before us in the Christ who is made our wisdom and righteousness. The inherent good is then to be understood as the same good, but as it is possessed by the believer for whom Christ has become the most apparent good. The inherent

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[1] Jonathan Edwards, p. 72.

[2] Ibid., p. 79.

[3] The MS "Catalogue" of his reading, now in the Beinecke Library at Yale, lists both the Principia and the Opticks on the first page. This is evidence that Edwards valued Newton's works highly.

good is discussed in the terms Edwards learned from Locke, to be sure, but the objective good is discussed in the terms he learned from scripture--not from Newton.

This point is not merely academic; it is crucial to the proper reading of all of Edwards' material on the soul. If we are to follow Miller then we are to think that Edwards was first a philosopher and analyst of the soul and then a theologian. The connection between his religious and his psychological writings would then be obscure. It would be reasonable to suppose that the former could be written out without damage or distortion to the latter. It is central to the thesis of this study that Edwards was not the least concerned with philosophical or psychological questions in themselves. When he wrote on these topics it was only for the reason of clarifying the function of theology. Like Calvin, he knew that the theologian would err in his thought about God and faith if he would seriously err in his thought about man and the world. His several hundred thousand sentences written to describe the inherent good make sense in the larger scope of his theology only when we remember that each one of them was composed while he had his eye on the objective good. Edwards never took his attention from the Christ whom he sought to make our most apparent good, therefore, we must regard this body of literature not as psychology, but as christology.

It was our task in the previous chapter to chronicle the objective good as it had chiefly to do with the action which God had in the affair. It is the task of the present chapter to set out the basic structure of the inherent good. This is no less the work of God, but now we are concerned with it as it has to do with the action man has in it.

A. The Real and the Legal

In a series of sermons preached in 1734 and published under the title "Justification by Faith Alone," Edwards said,

> as there is nobody but what will allow that there is a peculiar relation between Christ and his true disciples, by which they are in some sense in Scripture said to be one; so I suppose there is nobody but what will allow, that there may be something that the true Christian does on his part, whereby he is active in coming into this relation or union, some act of the soul of the Christian, that is the Christian's uniting act, or that which is done towards this union or relation (or whatever any please to call it) on the Christian's part: now faith I suppose to be this act.[4]

By insisting on the central place the action of the Christian has in justification Edwards puts himself in the shadow of one of the greatest of all Protestant heresies: works righteousness. This is a different language from that of the Westminster Confession, where it is said without ambiguity that those whom God has effectually called by

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[4] Works, IV, 71.

his grace alone (sola Dei gratia)[5] "he also justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone."[6] The Westminster divines did not, of course, deny that the Christian was in some sense active in theaaffair, but what action there is must be credited solely to the Holy Spirit who quickens and renews the Christian that he might be enabled to embrace the grace offered in the call.

Against the classical Reformed conception of grace, justification had to be understood chiefly in forensic terms. "He is said to be justified in God's sight," wrote Calvin, "who is both reckoned righteous in God's judgment and has been accepted on account of his righteousness."[7] This made it extremely difficult to formulate precisely how it was that sanctification belonged to justification. The former could not precede the latter, obviously, but then justification could not be given without any reason. Calvin, and after him most of the Reformed symbols and theologians, saw them to be two actions on God's part. He called it a "double grace" (duplex gratia),[8] the one legal

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[5] IX, ii., Schaff, III, 624f.

[6] XI, i., Ibid., III, 626.

[7] Institutes, III, xi, 2.

[8] Ibid., III, xi, 1.

and outside the limits of human experience, the other human but actuated from the outside.

But Edwards came upon this doctrinal tradition with a new understanding of the nature of the soul. As we have seen, he could put justification (the objective good) and sanctification (the inherent good) under one grace, under one event, under a single divine/human agency. When he puts the discussion of justification into the context of the union of the believer with Christ he is not doing anything most Reformed theologians had not been doing since the Institutes, but he does bring to the discussion a new understanding of the unio Christi. The union of Christ with the believer is to be understood in Edwards' thought as an enactment of the same personal history. There is no way of talking about Christ that does not have direct reference to what the saints are actually doing in the present. Therefore, Edwards can say with considerable force, and with what Miller wants to regard as the "language of revolution," that

> God sees it fit, that in order to a union's being established between two intelligent, active beings or persons, so as that they should be looked upon as one, there should be the mutual act of both, that each should receive the other, as actively joining themselves one to another. God, in requiring this in order to a union with Christ as one of his people, treats men as reasonable creatures, capable of act and choice; and hence sees it fit that they only that are one with Christ by their own act, should be looked upon as one in law. What is real in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is legal; that is, it is the something that is really

> in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the Judge.[9]

Here there is a subtle evasion of the traditional trap in this problem. Where the issue has always been the coordination of two wills or agents (man and God) Edwards has made it possible to set the relation of justification to sanctification within his discussion of the nature of the soul--which cannot have two wills within it, nor even one within it and the other outside "violently actuating" it. Therefore, Edwards can look directly into what is real in the union of Christ with the believer; he can examine that which believers actually do in response to Christ and in relation to others. We, too, must look into what is real in this series of relationships. Because of the centrality of the understanding in Edwards' thought we must ascertain what action the mind has in the affair. But, secondly, inasmuch as it is God who has made Christ our sanctification, we must learn how Edwards explains the part God has in it. Thirdly, we shall look at what is real in the relation man stands in to God, and, fourthly, what is real in man's relation to the world. And inasmuch as we come upon these discussions from the perspective of the first chapters in which we saw that man and God go to meet each other neither in the privacy of human experience, nor in the privacy of divine tran-

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[9]"Justification by Faith Alone," Works, IV, 71.

scendance, but in the public realm of history, we must inquire into the way in which faith becomes discernable in human behavior. In other words, to carry out the task of this chapter we must examine Edwards' understanding of sanctification as it divides into the doctrines of knowledge, grace, union, virtue, and visibility. Under each of these we shall learn what is real in the relation between man and Christ. We shall learn what man's inherent good is.

B. The Action of the Mind in It: Knowledge

1. The Necessity of Knowledge

The central role of knowledge in Edwards' thought appears in his attempts to arrive at an adequate definition of faith. Only once in the"Observations on Faith" does he attempt to settle on a single definition.

> Upon the whole, the best and clearest, and most perfect definition of justifying faith, and most according to the Scriptures, that I can think of, is this, faith is the soul's entirely embracing the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.[10]

And embracing, he immediately explains, is a metaphor for believing. He distinguishes it sharply from love which would be the action of the soul if its object were a person and not a revelation. The immediate object of faith, or of the sanctified mind, is scripture. The importance of this point for Edwards is underscored by the fact that

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[10]Works, II, 606.

the very first sentence he wrote down in the "observations" was "Faith is a belief in a testimony."[11]

This is a definition of faith at which Edwards could have arrived under the direction of his revised Lockeanism. For, as we have already seen, he will not permit any relationship between the believer and his Lord except that which knowledge can provide through the understanding. Therefore, there must be some sort of object before the mind which will yield a peculiarly powerful sort of knowledge to the understanding. But if he had not come to the decisive place of scripture along this path, he would certainly have learned how important it can be from the negative lesson of those who, in the Great Awakening, thought they could do without it. In his own account of these turbulent years, he says that the

> one erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner, now in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation, . . . either with, or without texts of scripture.[12]

From bitter experience Edwards the preacher was to learn what Edwards the young philosopher could have guessed:

> This error will defend and support all errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from heaven, it makes him incorrigible and impregnable in all his misconduct: for what signifies it, for poor, blind worms of the

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[11] Ibid., II, 601.

[12] "Thoughts on Revival," Works, III, 364.

> dust, to go to argue with a man, and endeavor to convince him and correct him, that is guided by the immediate counsels and commands of the great Jehovah?[13]

But this is not Edwards' final definition of faith. He is quite alert to the limitations in it. He sees, for example, that

> It may be objected, that this seems to make the revelation more the object of the essential act of faith than Christ. I answer, no; for the revelation is no otherwise the object by this definition, than as it brings and exhibits Christ to us. It is embracing the revelation in a sense and conviction of the goodness and reality of the Saviour it exhibits.[14]

If the immediate object of faith is scripture, then we must say that scripture is the immediate object of faith only insofar as it exhibits Christ, for it is only from the "excellency and sufficiency of the revealer and performer, we believe what is said is true, fully believe it; and from the glorious excellency of the Saviour and his salvation, all our inclination closes with the revelation."[15] How then shall we distinguish between that knowledge which is of scripture merely, and that which is of scripture insofar as it exhibits Christ?

The very least that can be said is that our knowledge must be correct. "If our doctrines concerning him, concerning his divinity, for instance, are false, we have not respect for the Christ of whom the Scriptures speak, but for an imaginary person, infinitely

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[13] Ibid., III, 365.

[14] "Observations on Faith," Works, II, 611f.

[15] Ibid.,

diverse."[16] These correct items of knowledge are collected under the head of "divinity." "By divinity is meant, that science or doctrine which comprehends all those truths and rules which concern the great business of religion." There are various arts and science dealing with different subjects,

> but there is one science, or one certain kind of knowledge and doctrine, which is above all the rest, as it is concerning God and the great business of religion: this is divinity; which is not learned as other sciences, merely by the improvement of man's natural reason, but is taught by God himself in a certain book he hath given for that end, full of instruction. . . . Upon this account divinity is rather called a doctrine, than an art or science.[17]

So important for Edwards is knowledge through understanding, that without knowledge there is no love; that which cannot be understood cannot be loved. The bible itself is worthless if it cannot be understood. Indeed, even "the sacraments of the gospel cannhave a proper effect no other way, than by conveying some knowledge."[18]

> There is no other way by which any means of grace whatsoever can be of any benefit, but by knowledge. . . . He that doth not understand, can receive no faith, nor any other grace; for God deals with man as with a rational creature; and when faith is in exercise, it is not about something he knows not what. Therefore, hearing is absolutely necessary to faith; because hearing is necessary to understanding.[19]

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[16]"Mysteries of Scripture," Works, III, 541.

[17]"The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth," Works, IV, 3.

[18]Ibid., IV, 5.

[19]Ibid., IV, 4f.

That God deals with man as a rational creature is the function in Edwards' thought of the same conception that informs his understanding of the covenant as the place where man and God meet according to their mind and heart.

2. The Knowledge Devils Have

But having followed Edwards out to this extreme position we soon find we cannot remain here without putting that position through considerable "refining." In a remarkable sermon Edwards entitled "True Grace Distinguished from the Experience of Devils," he enunciates the principle that "Nothing in the mind of man, that is of the same nature with what the devils experience, or are the subjects of, is any sure sign of saving grace."[20] As we learned above, "sin destroys spiritual principles, but not the natural faculties."[21] And as the devil has the natural understanding of an angel he is capable of great speculative knowledge of the things of God, of the eternal and invisible world. In fact, he probably saw the face of God before the fall. "And sin has no tendency to destroy the memory." The devil, he explains, "was educated in the best divinity school of the universe, viz., the heaven of heavens."[22] Much of what we know only by doctrine he knows as

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[20] Works, IV, 451.

[21] Ibid., IV, 454.

[22] Ibid., IV, 455.

knows by direct observation. He saw the creation. He knew Christ. The devil therefore "is orthodox in his faith; he believes the true scheme of doctrine; he is no Deist, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, or Antinomian; the articles of his faith are all sound."[23] If this is true with the devil, then how can we but conclude that a sinner may have more knowledge than hundreds of true saints of ordinary education, but that will never serve as evidence that there is saving grace in his heart.[24]

How then will we "refine" Edwards' understanding of the necessity of knowledge in order to save him from this inconsistency? The refining is to be done by means of Edwards' cherished distinction between natural and spiritual principles, or what he sometimes calls common and special grace. Common grace is available to everyone, for it was only the spiritual principles that were destroyed in the fall; only the special grace was withdrawn. What remains is only "the light of nature" or reason, and though it is still <u>through</u> the natural faculties of reason and speculation that saving knowledge must come, the "light of nature teaches us no truth as it is in Jesus."[25]

In 1734 Edwards preached one of his most famous

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[23] <u>Ibid</u>., IV, 457.

[24] <u>Ibid</u>., IV, 456.

[25] "The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth," <u>Works</u>, IV, 3.

sermons on this distinction, "A Divine and Supernatural Light," the doctrine for which is the claim "that there is such a thing as a Spiritual and Divine Light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means." As Edwards approaches a definition of divine and supernatural light, he first enumerates what that light is not. To begin with, "those convictions natural men may have of their sin and misery, is not this spiritual and divine light."[26] It might be recalled from previous discussion that the taking away of spiritual principles does not change the basic mechanism of the soul. One is still "affected" by what he perceives. The devils, for example, are not left unmoved by what they see of hell; their torment is indeed great.[27] Therefore, Edwards asks his congregation, who can be sure that when they have had as much terror and anguish as devils in hell they will still be saved?[28] And the contrary is equally true, for "persons who have no grace may have great apprehension of an external glory in things heavenly and divine."[29] They will be affected by the splendid features of heaven or anything external belonging to Jesus Christ either in his humble state on the cross with blood dripping down, or in his glorified s

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[26] Works, IV, 439.

[27] "The Experience of Devils," Works, IV, 458.

[28] Ibid., IV, 461.

[29] Ibid., IV, 462.

state, therefore, "these things are no certain signs of grace."[30]

If that light is not to be distinguished from the natural faculties by its affectional powers, neither will it be distinguished by making an "impression upon the mind, as though one saw any thing with the bodily eyes."[31] Once in a sermon Edwards moved to counter the common sense notion that the natural faculties would suffice to bring men to faith if they could have but an accurate view of Christ and other things of faith.

> Men are apt to think, that if they had lived in Christ's time, and had seen and heard him, and had seen his miracles, that they would have effectually convinced and turned from sin. But how was it in fact?[32]

This rhetorical question would have left none of his congregation wondering. And besides, the preacher added, sinners are about the same now as then. In what, without exaggeration, one could call the finest volume to have come from Edwards' hand there appears a passage in which the scholar turns on those who would, by the learned collection of historical fact, attempt to induce others to "venture their all" on Christ. "After all that learned men have said to them, there will remain innumerable doubts on their minds: they will be ready, when pinched with some

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[30] Ibid., IV, 463.

[31] "A Divine and Supernatural Light," Works, IV, 440.

[32] "The Warnings of Scripture are in the Very Best Manner Adapted to the Awakening and Conversion of Sinners," Works, IV, 335.

great trial of their faith, to say, How do I know this, or that? How do I know when these histories were written?"[33] It was for the greatest scholar of his generation and a tutor of Indian children to say that

> the gospel was not given only for learned men. There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in an hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the Scriptures, by such arguments as learned men make use of. . . . Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians, and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity; if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce 'em to sell all for Christ, in no other way but this.[34]

Neither by first-hand observation of historical incidents, nor by the reports of those incidents, will there be sufficient foundation for beliving in Christ savingly. But what if men actually saw hell? This would assist them no more than preaching does now; indeed it "would probably drive them to despair, or so take away their spirits that they would have no heart to seek God."[35]

Again, this spiritual light Edwards is speaking of is also to be distinguished from inspiration.

> it reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the bible, but only gives us a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the word of God.[36]

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[33] Religious Affections, p. 303.

[34] Ibid., p. 304.

[35] "The Warnings of Scripture," Works, IV, 336.

[36] "A Divine and Supernatural Light, Works, IV, 441. Italics mine.

Knowledge is necessary to grace, Edwards first tells us, then he gradually adds one qualification after another: it is not the mere accumulation of knowledge such as devils have, nor is it the affectional character of knowledge such as all men have, nor is it even a new piece of knowledge men are unable ordinarily to acquire. Whatever spells the important distinction between proper and improper knowledge must lie in the above quote in the words, "due apprehension." Let us now attempt to learn what that term could designate.

3. Knowledge as "Due Apprehension"

In his sermon on the experience of devils Edwards takes up the objection that the analogy between men and devils breaks down because men are able to love and devils cannot. He allows that the experience may be different,

> yet it may not be owning to any different principle, but only to different circumstances, under which these principles are exercised. The principles from whence the forementioned things in damned men and devils do arise, are two; natural understanding and self-love.[37]

If your love of God owes to a recognition according to the natural understanding that he loved you, that Christ died for you in particular, it springs from self-love. "Self-love is sufficient, without grace, to cause men to love those that love them, or that they imagine they love them,

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[37] Ibid., IV, 467.

and make much of them."[38] In a sermon of uncommon fury Edwards slows down for a moment to explain that there is a great difference "between a willingness not to be damned, and a being willing to receive Christ for your Saviour."[39] One may by the principle of self-love desire passionately to be spared eternal misery. "But that is a very different thing from being willing to come to Christ; persons very commonly mistake the one for the other, but they are quite two things. You may love the deliverance, but hate the deliverer."[40] The reason men are naturally God's enemies is not that they are not willing to be delivered from hell, but that they

> see nothing in Christ wherefore they should desire him; no beauty or comeliness to draw or incline their hearts to him. And they are not willing to take Christ as he is; they would fain divide Christ. There are some things in him that they like, and others that they greatly dislike; but consider him as he is, and as he is offered to them in the gospel, and they will not have him.[41]

In the Religious Affections Edwards says that for those who examine the scriptures according to the principle of self-love,

> 'tis easy. . . . to own Christ to be a lovely person, and the best in the world, when they are first firm in it, that he, though Lord of the universe, is captivated with love to them, and has his heart swallowed up in

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[38] Ibid., IV, 467.

[39] "Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," Works, IV, 241.

[40] Ibid., IV, 242

[41] "Men Naturally God's Enemies," Works, IV, 57.

> them, and prizes 'em far beyond most of their neighbors, and loved ' em from eternity, and died for 'em, and will make 'em reign in eternal glory with him in heaven.[42]

It is by the same principle that some can substitute for the Lord their experience of him.

> They keep thinking with themselves, what a good experience is this! What a great discovery is this! What wonderful things I have met with! And so they put their experience in the place of Christ, and his beauty and fullness.[43]

But, of course, if one looked on his experience with any accurate knowledge of his true condition, "it would knock their affections on the head; because their affections are built upon self, therefore self-knowledge would destroy them."[44]

The due apprehension which the saints have does not focus then first on the self, but on the nature of the object.

> They don't first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely; but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view.[45]

True saints not only apprehend Christ as he is presented by the gospel, but they perceive him in such a way that he is desired above all other things for what he is in himself, for his "beauty," and his "excellency and glory."

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[42] Religious Affections, p. 245.

[43] Ibid., p. 251.

[44] Ibid., 253

[45] Ibid., 246.

It is a sight or a sense of Christ's beauty and excellency

> that is the thing wherein does fundamentally consist the difference between those things in which the saving grace of God's Spirit consists, and the experience of devils and damned souls. This is the foundation of everything else that is distinguishing in true Christian experience.[46]

But beauty and excellency, as we have observed, are not aesthetic but ethical categories. Therefore, he who looks on Christ with an eye to his beauty will not see it lest he have a sense of his own moral corruption. The saints will be moved by God's moral beauty only if they have "an answerable frame of heart, consisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone."[47] He who sustains such a view of himself while he "has his eyes open to behold the divine superlative beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ," will not only be "convinced of Christ's sufficiency to stand as a mediator between him, a guilty, hell-deserving wretch, and an infinite holy God,"[48] but he will be overcome by an omnipotent power "so that now, not only the understanding but the will, and the whole soul, receives and embraces the Saviour."[49]

At the end of our discussion of righteousness we saw that the righteousness of Christ consisted in his providing a dramatic contrast between himself and his background.

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[46] "A Divine and Supernatural Light," Works, IV, 469.

[47] Religious Affections, p. 312.

[48] "A Divine and Supernatural Light," Works, IV, 469.

[49] Ibid., IV, 470.

The contrast was drawn by the fact that Christ always put himself where he was opposite to the world in its sinfulness. Where there was hatred, he was present with love; where there was pride, he was humble, etc. At the beginning of the present discussion we learned that it was altogether necessary for the sinner to have some knowledge of Christ's having made himself apparent in that way; but it must be a knowledge of a special sort. It cannot be the knowledge of mere observation--seeing Christ over against his background in all his excellency, even if it is a correct view. For this is the kind of knowledge that devils have. We do not have the "due apprehension" in our knowledge of Christ until we see that he is in contrast not merely with the historical circumstances of the biblical past, but also with us. We must see ourselves as the darkness for which Christ is the light. Christ did not come to be our friend simply, or to provide us with pleasant experiences; he came to cure our diseased lives. And until we can see the full range of our illness we will not have that knowledge of the Physician which will cause us to "venture our all upon him."

4. Knowledge as Sense and Light

It will be observed that as Edwards enters into the discussion of the nature of the "due apprehension" as we outlined it above, he relies heavily on metaphor. His

fondness for "light," "sense," and "taste" is especially evident. In "A Divine and Supernatural Light" these metaphors abound.

> Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness.[50]

The word "sense" rather effectively functions to remind us of the immediacy of the experience on the part of the believer, and draws attention to the fact that "believing savingly" is not restricted to intellection. "Sense" appears with great frequency in Edwards' pages. In his miscellaneous observations on faith, in an entry where he tries keenly to execute a single definition, he says faith "is the soul's entirely acquiescing in this revelation, from a sense of the sufficiency, dignity, glory and excellency of the author of the revelation."[51]

But, on the whole, "light" is more useful and adaptable. It is usually a synonym for knowledge, but knowledge in the double sense as a penetration of the mind, and as an act of the mind. When Edwards treats k knowledge as that which comes into the intelligence from the outside it is never as though it were a piece of secret information, but rather as though it were something which permitted the natural operations of the mind to pro-

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[50] Ibid., IV,

[51] Works, II, 606.

ceed unobstructed by those prejudices which keep reason from the truth.

> Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.[52]

There is a picturesque reference to this function of divine light in the Miscellanies--in one of those notes that cause the student of Edwards frequently to regret that he labored to keep his writing style so barren of poetic grace.

> A man that sets himself to reason without divine light is like a man that goes in the dark into a garden full of the most beautiful plants, and most artfully ordered, and compares things together by going from one thing to another to feel of them all, to perceive their beauty; but he that sees by divine light is like a man that views the garden when the sunlight is upon it. There is, as it were, a light cast upon the ideas of spiritual things in the mind of the believer which makes them appear clear and real, which before were but faint, obscure relations.[53]

This is an aspect of the doctrine of spiritual light that had been long afloat in the Puritan tradition. Before the Antinomian controversy, Sibbes could write

> The Spirit of God is so wise an agent that he works upon the soul, preserving the principles of a man. It alters the judgment by presenting greater reasons, and further light than it saw before. . . . When the Spirit of God sets the will at liberty, a man doth that he doth with full advisement of reason; for though God work upon the will, it is with enlight-

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[52]Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. 108.

[53]Townsend, No. 408.

ening of the understanding at the same time.[54] John Preston said that divine grace "elevateth reason, and makes it higher, it makes it see further than reason could."[55] And Edwards' own grandfather said in 1705, "Spiritual light received in Conversion, strengthens the reasons of men, and makes the law of nature more legible."[56]

Edwards often acknowledges that when the soul is in receipt of spiritual light there is a much greater sense of the "reality" of divine things; indeed, of all things. True saints do not only have a predominating opinion that these things are true, "and so yield their assent, as they do in many other matters of doubtful speculation," he says in a curious locution, "but they see that it is really so: their eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."[57] Moreover, while in divine light the saints have a fuller view of things also visible to natural men. Of the ideas which men have in spiritual knowledge, he says, "their circumstances and various relations and connections between themselves and other ideas appear more; there are more of those habitudes and respects taken notice

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[54]Quoted by Geoffrey Nuttall, Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 36.

[55]Quoted by Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson (eds.), The Puritans, (2 vols., New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), I, 39.

[56]Ibid., I, 40.

[57]Religious Affections, p. 292.

of, and they are also more clearly discerned."[58]

Edwards is keenly aware that affections which are raised very high may well be "heat without light,"[59] but he is also ready to caution us against the danger that knowledge of divine things can produce an inappropriate affection. Therefore, he will insist that those pepple whose affections are vigorously aroused by their being strongly persuaded of the truth of the Christian faith have no graciousness in them "unless their persuasion be a reasonable persuasion or conviction."

> By reasonable conviction, I mean a conviction founded on real evidence, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction. Men may have a strong persuasion that the Christian religion is true, when their persuasion is not at all built on evidence, but altogether on education, and the opinion of others.[60]

But more important in Edwards' thought is the way in which the light metaphor can be used to show that the soul is not only the object of light come into it from the outside, but it is also a source of light in itself. For, though it is hardly of the same degree, "the brightness that is in a diamond which the sun shines upon, is of the same nature with the brightness of the sun."[61] Therefore, he can say of the true saints that the "light of the Sun of Righteousness don't only shine upon them,

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[58]Townsend, No. 408.

[59]Religious Affections, p. 266.

[60]Ibid., p. 295.

[61]Ibid., p. 202.

but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little images of that Sun which shines upon them."[62]

5. Knowledge and the Holy Spirit

With this point we arrive at what is without question a major axis in Edwards' christological thought; for light, with all its metaphorical adaptability to the discussion of knowledge, is made by Edwards, as it had been for centuries of theologians before him, descriptive of the function of the Holy Spirit.

> The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action.[63]

There are several terms in this key sentence that require some investigation: principle, new nature, and spring of life and action. By "principle" he means

> that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exercise of the faculties of the soul; or a natural habit or foundation for action, giving a person ability and disposition to exert the faculties in exercises of a certain kind; so that to exert the faculties in that kind of exercises, may be said to be his nature.[64]

It should be emphasized in this definition that for the soul to operate by a new principle does not mean to alter

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[62] Ibid., pp. 202f.

[63] Ibid., p. 200.

[64] Ibid., p. 206.

its basic natural equipment. In the 1734 sermon on divine light he makes it very plain that it "is not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it. . . . God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature; and makes use of his human faculties."[65] In a delightful manipulation of the light metaphor he once suggested that even though the Spirit of God shines on all men and influences all in some way, natural men are influenced, as it were, from the outside. They are moved, but they do not respond; they are like

> a body that is very dark or black; and though that body be the subject of the light, yet, because the light becomes no principle of light in it, so as to cause the body to shine, hence that body don't properly receive its denomination from it, so as to be called a lightsome body.[66]

This underscores poetically what he wants psychologically to preserve: the natural integrity of the human being. But what can he mean then when he talks of a "new nature" and says that the distinction between false and true affections is that the latter "are attended with a change of nature"?[67]

> If there be a very great alteration visible in a person for a while; if it ben't abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a stated manner to be much as he used to be; it appears to be no change of nature. For nature is an abiding thing. A swine that is of a

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[65] Works, IV, 443.

[66] Religious Affections, p. 201.

[67] Ibid., p. 340.

> filthy nature may be washed; but the swinish nature remains. And a dove that is of a cleanly nature may be defiled, but its cleanly nature remains.[68]

What is misleading in this passage is that it bears a distinctly substantialist flavor. It would seem that when he is using the figure of washing off the pig he is suggesting that "nature" in this instance refers to the physical being of the animal. If this were the case, we should find him guilty of a rather serious sort of inconsistency. Earlier in this study we saw that "nature" for him was a moral term and referred to the way in which a person actually conducted himself. To say that our nature is fallen is only to say that we always act in one way rather than in another. It would seem therefore, appropriate to read the above passage as though the point were not that the nature of the swine or the dove is physical and therefore unalterable, but rather that "nature is an abiding thing" in the sense that people will continue acting as they have done unless there is a fundamental change--unless their habits conform to a new principle. What, then, is that new "spring of life and action" that will alter our abiding habits?

It is at this point that we see why this doctine in Edwards' thought is a christological axis. Edwards is a filioque trinitarian; the Holy Spirit is the spirit of both the Son and the Father. Having explained that

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[68]Ibid., p. 341.

the Spirit, in the form of knowledge, has been united to the faculties of the soul and operates there as a new principle of action for those faculties, he can now say with considerable force that the soul

> is indued with a new nature: but nature is an abiding thing. All the exercises of grace are entirely from Christ: but those exercises are not from Christ, as something that is alive, moves and stirs something that is without life, and yet remains without life; but as having life communicated to it; so as through Christ's power, to have inherent in itself, a vital nature. In the soul where Christ savingly is, there he lives. He don't only live without it, so as violently to actuate it; but he lives in it; so that that also is alive.[69]

This passage has behind it the whole weight of Edwards' thought. There is most prominently the thesis that we cannot meet Christ anywhere outside the limits of that which the human soul can experience. Therefore, Christ does not "violently actuate" our soul from the outside. But, on the other hand, the sophistication of his psychological categories makes it possible for us to affirm that Christ is nonetheless extra nos. There is no equivalency between Christ and experience; Christ is not a feeling, or a state of consciousness. He is indeed outside us, but he is outside as an object of our knowledge. And when we come to know him not as just another event in history (which he also is), but as a person in whom is everything good, then he becomes for us the most apparent good. But since our will is as the most apparent good is,

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[69] Ibid., p. 342.

we are as Christ is. We are "little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light."

We saw first in this discussion that before there could be a saving relationship between Christ and the sinner the latter would have to have correct knowledge of his savior. But the knowledge must be of a particular sort; it must be what Edwards referred to once as "due apprehension" of Christ's excellency. We found that he meant by this that the observer must first see Christ's excellency as it can be seen over against the biblical background, but then he must also see that Christ's excellency concerns him in his own moral present. Christ is in contrast not only to the Scribes and Pharisees, but also to those who view them in the present. When the sinner sees Christ in this manner then his knowledge so causes in him a new sort of action in life that we can say Christ dwells savingly within him. He and Christ are one.

C. The Action God Has in It: Grace

As we followed the pathmarkers set up in the christological discussion of the second chapter into the key doctrine of knowledge we found that the path has led us into other heavily forested areas we must explore before we can reach a conclusion which may be considered a genuine clearing. At the edge of much of our wandering so far has been the matter of union with Christ; and adjoined to that

is the conformity to Christ or the way in which we duplicate his actions in the world. But on the way to these critical areas there is a smaller though interesting item to be covered.

If we recall that Edwards was working against the backdrop of Calvinist theology, it would be interesting now that we have seen a great deal of the foreground to look into one of the doctrines that gives Reformed theology its distinctiveness: grace. We observed earlier that Edwards will not let a single item elude the determination of God; but now how does this conviction read against the christological affirmation that Christ is not outside violently actuating us, but is livingly and savingly present in the soul? Since this is the case, he must admit that "'tis very true that God requires nothing of us as a condition of eternal life but what is in our own power," but the centuries of Augustinian theology weigh heavily on his pen, causing him to continue:

> and yet 'tis very true at the same time that it's an utter impossible thing that ever man should do what is necessary in order to salvation, nor do the least towards it, without the almighty operation of the Holy Spirit of God--yea, except everything be entirely wrought by the Spirit of God.[70]

But Edwards has developed an anthropology that not only enables him shamelessly to persist in this apparent contradiction, but even makes the connection between these

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[70]Townsend, No. 71.

propositions logical. "I do not contradict myself by saying that all that men do in religion is entirely their own act," Edwards confidently says; "I mean that everything they do, they themselves do, which I suppose none will contradict."[71] Behind this simple remark is the furious argument of the Freedom of the Will, where he showed in agreement with Locke, that it makes no sense to say that the will has a will.

When we move this into the Reformed doctrine of irresistible grace, he can say pointedly:

> In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz., our own acts.[72]

Now we can see that for Christ to live savingly within the soul is not to have another will within us, but to have a certain kind of will. The operations of grace then do not follow any divinely instituted procedure by which an objective observer might recognise them. When Edwards sat down to write his "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," a document that not only tells the ironic story of his "successes" but also shows the empirical inclination of his mind, he recorded manifestations of grace which were as various as human beings are various. Sometimes, he wrote,

> Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners;

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[71] Ibid., No. 71.

[72] "Efficacious Grace," Works, II, 580.

> but some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes manifested in the gospel, and shining forth in the face of Christ. Some view the all-sufficiency of the mercy and grace of God; some, chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them; and some look most at the truth and faithfulness of God. In some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promises.[73]

The list of variations goes on for pages showing that even the doctrine of grace, which normally is thought to represent the will of God in all its supernatural purity and evenness, is brought before the recognition that Christ and man meet within the vagaries of human experience.

If it be asked, then, how one first comes to see Christ as the most apparent godd, the answer must be that there is nothing outside his own will active as a cause. All that can be said is that anyone at any time can begin living according to the conviction that Christ is all, while he, the sinner, is nothing. How this happens depends on the present nature of the sinner and the circumstances of his viewing the Lord. And perhaps Edwards would continue to say that in these respects every man is different.

D. The Relation Between Mandand God: Union

Whatever the nature of the beginning, the state of grace or sanctification is regularly described by

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[73] Works, ed. E. Williams and E. Parsons, (8 vols.; Leeds: 1806-11), III, 34.

Edwards as the state of being one with Christ. Like his treatment of divine and supernatural light, he surrenders most of this discussion to metaphor. In a sermon preached at the installation of a minister he falls into one of his most extended metaphorical constructions, and claims authority for it on the basis of scripture.

> Of all the many various kinds of union of sensible and temporal things that are used in Scripture to represent the relation there is between Christ and his church; that which is between bridegroom and bride, or husband and wife, is much the most frequently made use of in both the Old and New Testaments.[74]

The minister's relation to the church is itself like a marital relation, but blessed as it is, it is but a shadow of that which is between Christ and his faithful believers.

> Christ is the true husband of the church, to whom the souls of the saints are espoused indeed, and to whom they are united as his flesh and bones, yea, and one spirit; to whom they have given themselves in an everlasting covenant, and whom alone they cleave to, love, honor, obey, and trust in, as their spiritual husband, whom alone they reserve themselves for as chaste virgins, and whom they follow whithersoever he goeth.[75]

And as with the lovers from whom the freshness of their delight in each other has not vanished, "Christ and the church rejoice in each other's beauty."[76] But the time when the rejoicing will be the greatest is at the glorification of the saints with Christ in heaven. Here the preacher's words surely brought a blush to the young ladies in attendance, and stirred the hearts of those

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[74] "The Church's Marriage," III, 565.

[75] Ibid., III, 566.

[76] Ibid., III, 568.

not too old to have forgotten. For the church, at the time of the glorification, will enter into Christ as into the bridal chamber.

> She shall then be brought to the entertainments of an eternal wedding feast, and to dwell eternally with her bridegroom; yea, to dwell eternally in his embraces. Then Christ will give her his loves; and she shall drink her fill, yea, she shall swim in the ocean of his love.[77]

And then at the appointed time Christ will come and take the church into the palace of glory with himself, "and this glorious bridegroom and bride shall, with all their shining ornaments, ascend up together into the heaven above the heavens," where they will "thenceforward rejoice together, in consummate, uninterrupted, immutable, and everlasting glory, in the love and embraces of each other, and joint enjoyment of the Father."[78]

Certainly the most revealing feature of this metaphor is the suggestion throughout that the union between Christ and the saints is one of great passion. We are more prepared to think this than if Edwards had told us directly, for here one has the irrepressible feeling that he is calling on all of the sublimity of the union with his wife in order to give expression to what he no doubt frequently knew in the exercise of his faith. In this connection there is a very revealing remark in the Miscellanies:

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[77] Ibid., III, 569f.

[78] Ibid., III, 571.

> Christ has an human nature as well as we, and has an inclination to love those that partake of the human as well as we. That inclination which in us is turned to the other sex in him is turned to the Church which is his spouse.[79]

But beyond this the metaphor fails to illumine very much. It is interesting only in a picturesque, and possibly a biographical, sense. Much more elucidating is the extended metaphorical use of the arboreal graft which Edwards wrote into the Images or Shadows of Divine Things. The first thing which grafting signifies is the ingrafting of the soul into Christ. It is "so united with him as to have a vital union with him and become a member or branch in him,"and hence the soul "has a new head of vital influence, derives vital influence from Christ, and lives by his life." Next it signifies Christ uniting himself to believers in his incarnation. Now the process is reversed.

> All the fruit of the tree is by the ingrafting this tender twig into it. This ingrafted branch bears all. The tree in itself bears no good fruit, it is very sowr, but this ingrafted branch furnishes it. . . . The stock remains the same, but the fruit is altered. So, by Christ being ingrafted, the faculties of the soul are the same; there is the same human nature still, but there is a new fruit of grace, holy exercises and practice, and true blessedness.[80]

With this variation of the metaphor Edwards adds to the concept of a vital union with Christ the notion that the fruit of our life is the same fruit that Christ's life bears, that we are one in the productivity of our lives.

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[79]Yale MSS, No. 189.

[80]Perry Miller (ed.), op. cit., No. 166.

And just as far as one could say that the whole significance of Christ's apparent life is the visible fruit of it, so far could one say that the visible fruit of our life is the bearing of Christ himself. This, at any rate, is still another direction into which Edwards has taken the metaphor of grafting.

> Christ is ingrafted into every believer; every believer is ingrafted into Christ. . . . For the believer is not only in Christ, but Christ in him. Christ is born in the soul of the believer and brought forth there, and every believer is a mother of Christ. Grace in the soul is the infant Christ there, a tender twig ingrafted from an heavenly stock in the soul by which it bears all its fruit.[81]

Edwards' occasional references to the conformity of the believer with Christ closely parallel these themes in the discussion of union. In one of the annotations on scripture which Grosart collected for publication in the last century, he comments on Romans 8: 29:

> This is the sum of what the elect are predestinated to--viz., to be conformed to the image of His Son, to be made like His Son, and to have communion with Him in His holiness and in His happiness.[82]

Those who are "predestinated" are

> conformed to Christ in His relation to the Father in His Sonship, and are made also the children of God. . . . They are conformed to Christ in the Father's love to Him, and are made partakers with Him in it as members. . . . They are conformed to Christ in His exaltation and glorification, . . . in His enjoyment of the Father in heaven. . . . They are conformed to Him in His reigning over the world. . . .

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[81] Ibid., No. 166.

[82] Grosart, p. 154.

> This glory, this excellency and happiness that consists in the saints being conformed to Christ, is the sum of the good that they are predestinated to, and not only their being made like Him in conversion and sanctification.[83]

Being made so much like Christ, and being made one with him, the saints therefore possess all things with Christ. This is well put in one of the earliest entries in the Miscellanies.

> by Virtue of the believers Union with X, he Doth Really Possess all things. . . . I mean that God three in one all that he is, and all that he has, and all that he Does, all that he has made or done, the Whole Universe, bodies & spirits Li[ght] heaven angels, men & Devils, Sun moon stars, Land and sea, fish and fowls, all the silver and Gold, kings & Potentates as well as mear men, ar[e] [as] much the Xtians, as the money in his pocket, the Clothes he wears, or the house he Dwells in as the victuals he eats.[84]

But with this it may appear that Edwards is too dependent on metaphor. We must ask therefore whether there be any non-metaphorical propositions into which his talk about the unio Christi might be translated. Certainly we must recognise that he is not proposing any sort of substantialist mingling of our being with that of Christ's nor is he opting for a mystical conception of it. There is neither an alteration of the saint's basic human integrity nor his submersion into the vast, boundless eternal. By "union with Christ" Edwards is referring to the presence of Christ in the soul of the saint. For insofar as Christ lives in the soul through his Holy Spirit he is united to the saint. The completion of this union will

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[83] Ibid., p. 154.

[84] Yale MSS, No. ff.

consist, on the one hand, of an identity of the mind and the heart of the saint with the mind and the heart of Christ, and, on the other, of an actual physical presence of the one with the other. The degree to which Edwards pictures the union as presence in literal terms is astonishing. In an entry in the Miscellanies he considers whether the resurrection will have any effect on the bodies of the saints with regard to their union with Christ. And soon it becomes apparent that for Edwards the body participates as much in this union as the soul,

> because God made the [hu]man soul, With a Design that it should, be United, to a body, therefore he has made inseparable from his Nature, eternally inseparable, [th]at is by Any but God, that it should, strongly incline to A Union to the body.[85]

Let us understand the doctrine of unio Christi therefore as his way of talking about overcoming the historical distance between Christ and the saint, both in terms of spiritual and physical presence. Throughout this study we have emphasized the historical character of the encounter between Christ and man. Edwards' talk about the unio Christi is a strong exclamation point for this theme, because it tells us that Christ's history and ours are the same history. Christ has no life except in us. For us he cannot exist except as he lives in us. This sort of union does not come upon one all at once, as it were, since he must come to it out of his own history.

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[85] Ibid., No. bb.

He must grow and develop and progress in his union with Christ. As we shall see later, Edwards carries this progressive development on beyond death. Death is not the end of history. It only changes the location for it. History continues in both heaven and hell, and it continues forever. The saint's union with Christ will also increase in perfection forever.

But in the meantime the union of the saint with Christ must be seen in terms of what the saint actually does now, for only in that way is the presence of Christ apparent in his life. Therefore, we are brought to the conclusion that everything we have so far examined in Edwards' christology--his doctrine of man, his understanding of the nature of righteousness and his discussion of divine light and union with Christ--all lead to precisely the same place: "holy practice," or the visible exercise of faith. In what could be taken as the major conclusion to the treatise on the Religious Affections, he asserts the point forcefully:

> Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about his saints, as fruit is the end of all the husbandman does about the growth of his field or vineyard. . . . And therefore everything in a true Christian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice, is what every grace, and every discovery, and every individual thing, which belongs to Christian experience, has a direct tendency to.[86]

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[86]p. 399.

E. The Relation Between Man and the World: Virtue

1. Love and Virtue

When Edwards comes to discuss holy practice the two terms around which his thought revolves are "love" and "virtue."

How much of his thought dovetails into the concept of love is probably obvious. When he draws on the light metaphor to bear the weight of his investigations into the nature of knowledge, we find that light serves equally well to freight the concept of love. The light which emanates forth from the soul, inasmuch as it is the expression of the whole man, is as properly said to be love as understanding. Grace, we also saw, as it is received in the heart of the saint is nothing more nor less than the love of God for the sinner and the love of man for God. The union with Christ, in which grace and knowledge are identified, is understood also to consist finally in love, since it is Christ himself who dwells livingly within us.

If we pick up the narrative at this point and carry it on as far as Edwards' several remarks about the nature of love itself will allow us, we shall find several new features of his christology. First, it is to be

observed that since it is Christ who is united to us, the love which results is therefore the Holy Spirit himself.

> And herein lies the mystery of the vital union that is between Christ and the soul of a believer, which orthodox Divines speak so much of, Christ's love--that is, His Spirit which is actually united to the faculties of their souls.[87]

Here is a confirmation of a theme we partially exposed earlier: the eternal operations of the trinity are, in Edwards' thought, never to be separated from the operations of the souls of the saints. The saints are participants in the trinity itself. The doctrine of the trinity may be read as a description of the way in which Christ becomes present in the understanding of the saints, and being present becomes their reason for acting.

But now we must deal with another dimension of the action of the soul. We have seen how love flows in and out of the sinner regenerating him, and we have seen that that love is the Holy Spirit, but now how do we make sense of Edwards' talk about God as an <u>object</u> of love, as distinct to his being the source of it? The direction of this answer is given in Edwards' remark that "a Christian love to God, and Christian love to men are not properly two distinct principles in the heart. These varieties are radically the same; the same principle flowing forth towards different objects, according to the order of their existence."[88] In a quainter and lovelier way he suggests

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[87]"Treatise on Grace," Grosart, p. 54.

[88]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 35f.

the same in his chronicle of the revival when he says that although we cannot be charitable to Christ as the women were when he was on earth and was poor, since in his exalted state he is infinitely above our charity, "yet we may be charitable to Christ now, as well as they then; for though Christ is not here, yet he has left others in his room, to be his receivers, and they are the poor."[89]

To talk about God as the object of love, then, is to talk at the same time about the world as the object of love. The one is inseparable from the other. They are of the same principle in the soul. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit be that new principle, that new "spring of life and action" we should see in the saint his love of God as it is expressed in love toward the world. That this is the case is nowhere more clearly stated than in the brief but elaborately argued Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue. As regards the relation between the terms, love and virtue, Edwards observes that not only Christian divines, but also Deists, allow

> that virtue most essentially consists in love. And I suppose it is owned by the most considerable writers, to consist in general love of benevolence, or kind affection: though it seems to me the meaning of some in this affair is not sufficiently explained; which perhaps occasions some error or confusion in discourses on this subject."[90]

The source of this confusion, as we shall presently see,

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[89]"Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, 1740," Works, III, 423.

[90]True Virtue, p. 4.

is the inability of most observers sufficiently to account for the true nature of self-love. But the discussion turns specifically to love only occasionally in this volume; the central attention is on virtue.

2. The Definition of Virtue

In characteristic fashion Edwards begins this dissertation by carefully preparing a definition of his subject matter. "Whatever controversies and variety of opinions there are about the nature of virtue," he writes in the opening sentence, "yet all excepting some sceptics, who deny any real difference between virtue and vice, mean by it something beautiful, or rather some kind of beauty or excellency."[91] There are many kinds of beauty, of course, which are not properly regarded as virtue--such as the beauty of a building or a flower or of the harmony of the voice or even of the ideas of great statesmen and philosophers. But virtue is of a different kind of beauty; it is

> the beauty of those qualities and acts of the mind that are of a moral nature, i.e., such as are attended with desert or worthiness of praise or blame. Things of this sort it is generally agreed, so far as I know, do not belong merely to speculation: but to the disposition and will, or (to use a general word I suppose commonly well understood)to the heart. Therefore I suppose I shall not depart from the common opinion when I say, that virtue is the beauty of the qualities and exercises of the heart, or those actions which proceed from them. So that when it is enquired, what is the

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[91] Ibid., p. 1.

> nature of true virtue? This is the same as to enquire what that is, which renders any habit, disposition, or exercise of the heart truly beautiful?[92]

"Beauty" is such a prominent word, not only in this dissertation, but all through Edwards' works, that it would serve us well to pause in our examination of some of the last pages to come from his pen and turn to some of the very first. In his "Notes on the Mind" where, as we observed above, so much of his thought found its enduring shape, he speaks frequently of beauty. "All beauty consists in similarness or identity of relation. In identity of relation consists all likeness, and all identity between two consists in identity of relation."[93] Edwards' models for beauty of this sort are primarily geometric.

> Thus if there be two perfect equal circles, or globes, together, there is something more of beauty than if they were of unequal, disproportionate magnitudes. And if two parallel lines be drawn, the beauty is greater, than if they were obliquely inclined without proportion, because there is equality of distance.[94]

But beauty, or equality of relation, is not merely a feature or a characteristic of existing things; it is a characteristic of being itself.

> If there are two bodies of different shapes, having no similarness of relation between the parts of the extremities; this, considered by itself, is a deformity, because being disagrees with being, which must undoubtedly be disagreeable to perceiving being: because what

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[92] Ibid., pp. 1f.

[93] Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. 33.

[94] Ibid., p. 31.

> disagrees with Being, must necessarily be disagreeable to Being in general, to every thing that partakes of Entity, and of course to perceiving being; and what agrees with Being, must be agreeable to Being in general, and therefore to perceiving being.[95]

With these sentences we find ourselves once more hard upon that evidence that many took to bespeak a thoroughgoing idealism in the young Jonathan, for this seems to ask for a direct correspondence between being and the idea of being in the mind. Therefore, we should be careful to remind ourselves of what was learned in the earlier discussion of his intellectual discoveries in "Notes on the Mind." Idealism is cleanly avoided when he draws these thoughts out to their conclusion: if the world is ideal, so also is the mind; therefore, everything is as it appears to be. So when Edwards is talking about the disagreeableness that inheres between beings, and between beings and perceiving being, he is not surrendering the world to the mind; he is rather surrendering the mind to the world. He is speaking of the disagreeableness there is between experienced things in the world; he is talking about the way in which the perceiving being himself relates to the world.

It is for this reason that Edwards' talk of beauty is ultimately always moral. Acknowledging that, we can see here that what Edwards wants to include under the term "beauty" is precisely what he assembled for the definition

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[95] Ibid., p. 33.

of "excellency." This being the case, it should therefore beiplain that when Edwards flies to the notion of beauty to assist him in describing man's relationship to God and the world, he is repeating in man what he has already done in Christ by means of the term excellency. But the concept of beauty on which the elder Edwards called is not identical to that one written out in tentative form decades before; there is a subtle but critical refinement of that earlier view that reflects the wisdom gained in a long life of conflict with the fragmentariness of the world.

> There is a general and particular beauty. By a particular beauty, I mean that by which a thing appears beautiful when considered only with regard to its connection with, and tendency to, some particular things within a limited, and as it were a private sphere. And a general beauty is that by which a thing appears beautiful when viewed most perfectly, comprehensively and universally, with regard to all its tendencies, and its connections with every thing to which it stands related. The former may be without and against the latter.[96]

There is no difficulty here for the reader to see the writer pausing as he wrote to look back into his personal history, for so much of the anguish in Edwards' life can be contained in this distinction. How well he had learned, for example, that the love of the people for their church in Northampton had reference to some particular things within a limited, and as it were a private sphere. They had lost the view of the church according to <u>all</u> of the things to which it stands related. Turning

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[96] <u>True Virtue</u>, pp. 2f.

back to the page, he continued:

> That only, therefore, is what I mean by true virtue, which, belonging to the heart of an intelligent being, is beautiful by a general beauty, or beautiful in a comprehensive view, as it is in itself, and as related to every thing with which it stands connected.

Edwards has now prepared a clearing for the simple but quite habitable definition of his subject:

> True virtue most essentially consists in benevolence to being in general. Or perhaps, to speak more accurately, it is that consent, propensity and union of heart to being in general, which is immediately exercised in a general good will.[97]

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[97] Ibid., p. 3. We should not pass beyond this point without acknowledging the degree to which Edwards was following the ethical theory of Francis Hutcheson. In the latter's book, An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (London: R. Ware and J. & P. Knapton, 1753), is the remark, for example, that "what we call Beautiful in Objects, to speak in the Mathematical Style, seems to be in a compound Ratio of Uniformity and Variety: so that where the Uniformity of Bodies is equal, the Beauty is as the Variety; and where the Variety is equal the Beauty is as the Uniformity." p. 17. But not only does Edwards call upon the same concept of beauty with Hutcheson; Hutcheson, like Edwards after him, will also deny that beauty arises either in innate ideas or in the thing itself. Beauty is ingredient to the relation between man and the world. "By Absolute or Original Beauty, is not understood any Quality suppos'd to be in the Object, which should of itself be beautiful, without relation to any Mind which perceives it." p. 14. For this reason the degree of beauty which the person perceives depends on the nature of his experience. "No Composition of Objects which give not unpleasant simple Ideas, seems positively unpleasant or painful of itself, had we never observ'd anything better of the kind. Deformity is only the Absence of Beauty, or Deficiency in the Beauty expected in any Species: Thus bad Musick pleases Rusticks who never heard any better, and the finest Ear is not offended with tuning of Instruments, if it be not too tedious, where no Harmony is expected." p. 72. Another point at which the philosopher was heard by the boy was in his connection of beauty with virtue. Behind all of Hutcheson's ethical writing is the assumption that beauty in actions is properly known as virtue; and that the virtue of a man is his beauty.

But the definition is abstract. We must give it as much specific reference as possible. First, it might be noted that by "consent" Edwards certainly does not mean intellectual agreement or recognition; he is referring rather to an act of the will. He means something that is "immediately exercised in a general good will." Next, it should be emphasized that when Edwards speaks of "being in general," he is not making use of abstract ontological categories. He is referring, quite simply, to all of being. He wants the Christian to be benevolent to everything that is. What is, thirdly, to be observed is that such benevolence is not composed of vague and general acts toward all of being at once, but of acts toward a specific being. Edwards' concern is that the person will act on principles that derive from some "private system of being, . . . that contains but a small part of the great system, comprehending the universality of existence,"[98] for when he does he fractures the harmony of the whole. The person is to act in each instance with a view to the relations between the object of his action and the whole. When he serves his church he must remember that the church is related not just with those in that community who make possible its continuance, but it is related with everyone who has life and breath. Everyone of its actions and the actions of its members are to be regarded as they affect

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[98]True Virtue, p. 18.

the vast, unseen, unheard or hostile world of human beings around them.

It must be said again that Edwards is drawing an identity here between the love of God and the love of the world on the part of the Christian. The two loves spring from the same principle in the heart of the saint. The beauty or the excellency that obtains in the saint's relation to the world is the same beauty that marks God's relation to it. Or we could say that the end which the saint has for his actions in the world are the same end that God has in creating it. And when the person evidences such an excellency in his love or benevolence, we can see that he loves God, and that the will of God and his will are one.

> The most proper evidence of love to a created being arising from that temper of mind wherein consists a supreme propensity of heart to God, seems to be the agreeableness of the kind and degree of our love to God's end in our creation, and in the creation of all things, and the coincidence of the exercise of our love, in their manner, order, and measure, with the manner in which God himself exercises love to the creature in the creation and government of the world, and the way in which God, as the first cause and supreme disposer of all things, has respect to the creature's happiness in subordination to himself as his own supreme end.[99]

The opposite of true virtue so conceived is self-love. It is not meant by this term that a man loves "whatever is pleasing to him. Which only comes to this, that self-love is a man's liking, and being suited and pleased in that which he likes, and which pleases him; or,

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[99] Ibid., p. 24.

that it is a man's loving what he loves."[100] For in this case "self-love" would describe every human act. Rather Edwards means by it "a man's regard to his confined private self, or love to himself with respect to his private interest."[101] It is this latter impulse that causes a man to eschew the claim that the whole of being has on his affections and to love instead "those who are of his party, and who are warmly engaged on his side, and promote his interest."[102]

This definition and understanding of virtue fits in neatly with what we have so far seen in Edwards' life and thought, but there is nonetheless something spare and even barren about it; there is a cool rigidity running through the entire discussion. There is the sense that these thoughts come from the hand of an old man whose mental powers are still clear and vigorous, but whose passions have receded into reflection, driven there by the certain knowledge that the future held no more serious projects of the heart before him. We see no sign in these writings that when he has finished the page he will be eager to return to the Indian children; we sense rather that he would prefer to linger in the study and to let his mind thrill over the sublimity of its own operations.

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[100] Ibid., p. 42.

[101] Ibid., p. 45.

[102] Ibid., p. 47.

Sometime in the course of writing this manuscript he composed his letter to the Princeton trustees. To them he confessed he had a constitution "in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits."[103] It is tempting here to wonder what would have been added to this volume had the vigor and expectancy of youth impelled his hand. I should like to speculate that Edwards might have tied the discussion of virtue back to the apparent righteousness of Christ. How effectively he could have insisted here that no man can turn himself from self-love to true beauty, or excellency of soul, except that he set his eye on the excellency of Christ; except that Christ become for him the most apparent good.

The Nature of True Virtue is an eminently christological book. It, more than any other piece of Edwards' mature production, instructs us in the nature of man's response to the apparent righteousness of Christ. But how strange it is that the name of Christ scarcely enters these pages. It is especially strange when in the person of Christ he had the most perfect picture of the virtue he labored so abstractly to describe for us. The excellency of Christ, the reader will remember, arose out of the extraordinary balance or proportionality between Christ and the sinner; for he loved us while we were yet sinners; he died for us while we were yet his enemies; he was the light into our

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[103]Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. 410.

darkness. It is Christ above all others who stands in a relation of cordial agreement with being in general, whose benevolence is directed toward those in the greatest need of it.

But what was lost in the discussion of virtue was more than merely the references to Christ. What is so very difficult to see in these quiet sentences is the radical style of life to which we are summoned. We are asked to live without any confining loyalty to the orders of this world; we are to live in all human institutions as though they had the mark of death and error upon them. We are pilgrims in this world, not citizens. But we are not pilgrims who wander across the face of the earth in the quest of some utopia already laid out for us as a reward for the trials of this life; we are rather to take the path that descends by the low road into the path of human misery. Then, as we shall soon hear Edwards insisting, we must build a utopia within the limits of history--a real utopia.

F. The Apparent Christ and the Visible Saint

We shall conclude this survey of the inherent good, or that which is real in the relation between Christ and the believer, with a discussion of visibility. This is a subject toward which the student of Edwards comes from several directions at once. It should be evident

that with his emphasis on the public and historical character of faith, and with his denial of the importance of private communication with God, the visibility of the Christian is a natural conclusion to the line of investigation we have been following.

But it is at this point that Edwards also most clearly shows the decisive influence of the Puritans on his thought. "The essence of Puritanism," Gordon Harland has written, "was always an intense experience of conversion that issued in a most disciplined effort to make the regenerate life visible and a profound conviction that God was using them to revolutionize human history."[104] Even if he had never read the Puritan fathers with such obvious zest and thoroughness, Congregationalism itself, with its instincts for separatism, would have carried in its institutional memory the centrality of the old Puritan doctrine of the visibility of faith. It was this principle "which gave significance to their demand for separation, in the first place."[105] It was thought that the church could covenant with itself, and could take upon itself the responsibility to judge its own orthodoxy in faith and practice through communal methods of self-examination. This principle is clearly expressed in the church covenant of Altham, drawn up in about 1650, and quoted by

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[104] "American Protestantism: Its Genius and Its Problem," Drew Gateway, XXXIV (Winter, 1964), 72.

[105] Nuttall, Visible Saints, p. 131.

Nuttall:

> We thus apprehend, that they only are worthy that are Saints visible to the eye of rational charity, or such as, professing faith and repentance, live not in the neglect of any Christian duty or in commission of any known notorious sin; having such a measure of knowledge as to lead Christ into the soul, and the soul to Christ.[106]

The passage of the principle of visibility to American can be dramatically illustrated by John Winthrop's remark in his sermon, "A Modell of Christian Charity," which he wrote "On Boarde the Arrabella" and delivered "On the Attlantick Ocean": "That which the most in theire Churches maineteine as a truthe in profession onely, wee must bring into familiar and constant practice."[107] But the principle was soon to encounter on American soil its most serious challenge. For even though the "settlement of the New-English churches, with a long series of preserving and prosperous smiles from heaven upon them, is doubtless to be reckoned among the more wonderful works of God, in this age," the period is short until "people began more notoriously to forget the errand into the wilderness, and. . . . to neglect the primitive designs and interests of religion propounded by their fathers."[108] Unlike their parents and grandparents who dared the treachery of the North Attlantick and the American wilderness to erect

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[106] Ibid., p. 132.

[107] Miller and Johnson, The Puritans, I, 198.

[108] Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana (2 vols.; Hartford: 1820), II, 270.

their city on a hill, the young Americans found it difficult to profess so easily the regenerating presence of the Spirit. The result was inevitable. That church designed to be "the modell of Christian charity" was dwindling away.

It was this problem that lay before the view of the Synod of 1662 and which caused them to work out a famous compromise, called the "Half-Way Covenant" by its opponents. Those who could give no evidence of their conversion were not to be left outside the church, but were to be given restricted memberships. Their children could be baptized but they would be denied the right to have communion.[109] But compromise is not solution, and, despite the vigorous support of this Synod by most of the eminent divines, the crisis deepened.

At the turn of the century Solomon Stoddard took it upon himself to make the rough places a plain. He took to the pulpit in 1707 in Northhampton and delivered a sermon whose title alone was a call to arms: "The Inexcusableness of Neglecting the Worship of God under a Pretence of Being in an Unconverted Condition." The laws prescribed for worship and participation in the publich acts of the church were no longer to be understood as exclusive of those who could not profess experimental piety. The sacraments, he said, are not to be understood as a pro-

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[109] Cf., Walker Williston, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), I, 313ff.

fessing ordinance, but as a converting ordinance. "God in the Lord's Supper invites us to come to Christ, makes an affecting representation of his sufferings for our sin sins."[110] Increase Mather accused Stoddard of requiring unsanctified persons to come to the table; and Stoddard replied that the accusation "is not fairly laid down, my Position is, That Sanctifying Grace is not necessary to the lawful attending the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper."[111] Stoddard's theological argument for this position in his Appeal to the Learned is essentially that unconverted souls should not be restricted from the table on that ground, because it is conversion above all other things that is not in their power. It appeared to most that both reason and good sense were on Stoddard's side, and eventually he "carried most of New England with him."[112] But the judgment of history is different. By this move, Miller tells us, Stoddard

> took into the communion not merely the professing adults, but all adults. At one fell swoop he cured the evils of the Half-Way Covenant by going beyond it; he uprooted the New England Way in Northampton, and identified the visible church no longer with the community of saints, but with the town meeting--where he himself was dictator and lawgiver.[113]

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[110] Quoted by Frank Hugh Foster, op. cit., p. 39.

[111] A Guide to Christ, or, the Way of Directing Souls that are under the Work of Conversion (Cornhill: 1714), p. 2.

[112] Winslow, op. cit., p. 103.

[113] "Solomon Stoddard, 1643-1729," Harvard Theological Review, XXXIV (1941), p. 298.

At least until 1740 Edwards showed no inclination to depart either from the theory or from the practice of his grandfather. In an undated sermon on Prov. 8:34 he says of the sacraments that they "ought to be diligently and carefully attended by all that set themselves to seek the grace of God with such preparation as the Word of God directs to."[114] Here those who are to be admitted to communion are not the sanctified only, but also those who have not the grace of God. In the first volume Edwards wrote detailing his final opinion on the question of qualifications for admission to communion, there is no doubt he was keenly aware of the departure he was making from the accepted principles of the church in New England and especially of the church in Northampton.

> My appearing in this public manner on that side of the question, which is defended in the following sheets, will probably be surprising to many, as it is well known, that Mr. Stoddard, so great and eminent a divine, and my venerable predecessor in the pastoral office over the church in Northampton, as well as my own grandfather, publicly and strenuously appeared in opposition to the doctrine here maintained.[115]

In the same preface he also acknowledges his own change of mind on this question. He admits that he was formerly of the same opinion with his grandfather, "which I imbibed from his books, and have in my proceedings conformed to his

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[114]Quoted by John Gerstner, Steps to Salvation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 107.

[115]"An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church," Works, I, 85.

practice; though never without some difficulties in my view, which I could not solve."[116] We may, therefore, be confident that the position he now sets forth is by no means casually held.

The "main question" of An Humble Inquiry is "whether, according to the rules of Christ, any ought to be admitted to the communion and privileges of members of the visible church of Christ in complete standing, but such as are in profession, and in the eye of the church's Christian judgment, godly or gracious persons?"[117] This is so nearly a duplication of the covenant of the Altham church quoted above (p. 238.), that it would seem to justify Edmund S. Morgan's judgment that in Edwards this historic Puritan doctrine has come "full circle."[118] But, on the other hand, it could be reasonably argued that Edwards was not turning to the Puritan past as much as he was coming to terms with his own thought. In either case, in this discussion we have Edwards at his best.

Before we can be sure we have heard his full explication of this position, we must come to a complete understanding of what he means to include under the four key terms in the "main question": visibility, the church's Christian judgment, profession, and communion.

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[116] Ibid., I, 86.

[117] Ibid., I, 89.

[118] Visible Saints, the History of a Puritan Idea (New York: New York University Press, 1963), pp. 139ff.

1. The Visibility of Grace

On the question of the visibility of true graciousness, Edwards will not be satisfied with a merely negative judgment that someone does not have signs of wickedness, but he will look for a way of making the positive judgment that someone does have signs of true godliness.[119] Remembering the words of the sermon on the experience of devils distinguished from true grace, we should expect him here to insist that there "is no one qualification of mind whatsoever, that Christ has properly made the term of this [judgment]; not so much as a common belief that Jesus is the Messiah, or a belief of the being of God. It is the credible profession and visibility of these things, that is the church's rule in this case."[120]

Our attention is drawn to the word "credible" in this remark. He is looking for some ground on which the manifestation of true graciousness can be believed. He is looking for the kind of "judgment wherein men do properly exercise reason, and have their reason under the influences of love and other Christian principles; which do not blind reason, but regulate its exercises; being not contrary to reason, though they be very contrary to

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[119] "An Humble Inquiry," Works, I, 95.

[120] Ibid., I, 90.

cencoriousness or unreasonable niceness and rigidness."[121] Now he will allow a distinction between real and visible saints for, after all, God gave us no certain rule by which we are to judge whether a man has the inward qualifications since these things are out of his neighbor's view.[122] Visibility, therefore, "is a relative thing, and has relation to an eye that views or beholds."[123] But, nonetheless, to say that a visible or apparent saint is only an apparent saint is nonsense. We shall know none other than apparent saints.[124] The church is a gathering of persons who can know each other in no other way than as they appear to each other. In his reading of history, and in his familiarity with the Puritan story, not to mention his own experience during the Great Awakening, he had enough vivid examples of the danger that can be wrought if this notion be abandoned, if it be thought that the judgment is to be made on the basis of a reality which is not seen. He is only asking us to see that by what appears in the communal life of the saints there is adequate ground for a reasonable, credible judgment.

However, in the pages of the Humble Inquiry he does not attempt to provide anything like a sufficient method for judging the evidence available in the apparent

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[121] Ibid., I, 92.

[122] Ibid., I, 169.

[123] Ibid., I, 96.

[124] Ibid., I, 96f.

conduct of lives. But this is precisely what he did in the book by which his name will be remembered the longest, A Treatise Concerning the Religous Affections, first presented as sermons in 1742-43, and eventually published in 1746, three years before the Humble Inquiry. The treatise is divided into three parts. The first calls on evidence from scripture, philosophy,and psychology in support of the proposition that "True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections."[125] The second deals with "some things, which are no signs that affections are gracious, or that they are not,"[126] and the third part is intended "to take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so."[127] A rapid survey of the treatise will indicate which kind of data is relevant to the judgment and the criteria by which the judgment is to be made.

First,Edwards lists the twelve signs which do not indicate whether religious affections be truly gracious. "'Tis no sign one way or the other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high."[128] True affec- should be high because their object is a very great being, but still there is evidence in scripture and in experience

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[125] Religious Affections, p. 95.

[126] Ibid., p. 127.

[127] Ibid., p. 193.

[128] Ibid., p. 127.

that "there are religious affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving."[129] Nor 'tis it a "sign that affections have the nature of religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body."[130] Anyone can "see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them."[131] Those who are "fluent, fervent and abundant, in talking of the things of religion," are for that reason alone not to be judged as to the true graciousness of their affections.[132] Even if one cannot put his finger on the natural cause of his affections there is no reason to think that they therefore originate in a supernatural grace.[133] For "'tis God's manner," Edwards says in a telling sentence,

> in the great works of his power and mercy which he works for his people, to order things so, as to make his hand visible, and his power conspicuous, and men's dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence. ... . and none might say mine own hand hath saved me.[134]

It is clearly not enough to know that it is not by my hand; there must be some visible evidence that it was by God's hand. But we shall not learn whether those visi-

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[129] Ibid., p. 130.

[130] Ibid., p. 131.

[131] Ibid., p. 132.

[132] Ibid., p. 135.

[133] Ibid., p. 138.

[134] Ibid., p. 139f.

ble actions are of God simply because the affections they express "come with texts of scripture, remarkably brought to the mind."[135] Nor even if "there is an appearance of love in them."[136] There are many kinds of love which prove under trial to be counterfeit. Even if we find that a person has affections of many kinds exhibiting a certain symmetry, there is no good reason to think they are gracious.[137]

> The various faculties, principles and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: if there be sweet water in the fountain, sweet water will from thence flow out into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow out into all those channels. So that the channels and streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water.[138]

If the nature of the water is not disclosed by the variety of fountains one may just as well say that nothing can "be determined concerning the nature of the affections by this, that comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience, in a <u>certain order</u>."[139] This last may be one of the most interesting of the neutral signs since it was common at the time to judge the verity of an affection by whether it followed a legal conviction of sin. No one knew better than Edwards that even

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[135] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 142

[136] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 146.

[137] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 147

[138] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 151.

[139] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 151.

if persons have had "great terrors, which really have been from the awakening and convincing influences of the Spirit of God," it is still possible that the "unmortified corruption of the heart may quench the Spirit of God (after he has been striving) by leading men to presumptuous, and self-exalting hopes and joys, as well as otherwise."[140] And if we wonder whether there be sufficient self-mortification to render those legal frightenings fruitful, we shall not be able to judge by observing that persons are "zealously engaged in the external duties of worship."[141] And no more reliable will our knowledge be if we see mouths opening to praise and glorify God,[142] or if persons are "exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good estate."[143] Some will make strong outward manifestations of true affection designed to please those who are truly godly,[144] but such manifestations are no basis of judgment, just as the nature of a tree cannot be determined apart from the fruit which it will bear.[145]

These neutral signs are as much the reflections of the pastor as they are the analysis of the philosopher,

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[140] Ibid., p. 157.

[141] Ibid., p. 163.

[142] Ibid., p. 165.

[143] Ibid., p. 167.

[144] Ibid., p. 181.

[145] Ibid., p. 185.

for both knew that unless that which appears in the behavior of the saints be grounded in something more enduring than the mere pleasure which the affections provide, those affections would vanish. They both knew that private intercourse between the creature and his creator caused one to withdraw from meaningful talk and action in the world; but at the same time they knew that the saint's life in the world had to be of a quality radically different from that of the natural man, and not merely in the design of it, but especially in the fruit of it.

Thus when he comes to the "positive" signs he calls first upon those themes which inform his theology in its very center, and which run just under the sufface of every section of his thought. First, true affections "do arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural and divine."[146] But this won't be known by looking on that metaphorical point where the supernatural light strikes the soul, but rather by seeing whether there is evidenced in his life the "new simple idea" of Christ--whether, in other words, Christ is the reason for his acting as he does. In the second sign, which Edwards calls the "first objective ground of gracious affections," he underlines the importance that it be Christ who is our reason and not some

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[146] Ibid., p. 197.

pleasantness of emotion within ourselves.[147] In the third sign, Edwards reminds us that the excellency of divine things is primarily a moral excellency; it must result not in contemplation but in action. Christ is not equivalent to reason, but is rather equivalent to the reason for our actual behavior in the world. But in the fourth sign, he cautions us against assuming that the heart is involved in the affair at the expense of the mind: "Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things."[148] Christ will become our reason only through the manner of his appearance, though he will not be our greatest apparent good until we have "a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men."[149] And yet this diversity does not mean that we are therefore sundered from the regulation of reason for, as he puts it in the fifth sign, "truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the reality and certainty of divine things."[150] Affections are never entirely distinct from beliefs, from the intellectual assent to the propo-

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[147] Ibid., pp. 240ff.

[148] Ibid., p. 266.

[149] Ibid., p. 271.

[150] Ibid., p. 291.

sitions of divinity--although for Edwards this is always an assent "founded on real evidence, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction."[151]

And if we wonder precisely where that spiritual exercise of reason departs from the natural use of it, Edwards tells us in the sixth sign that there is a legal repentance, or conviction of our sinfulness, that can come by means of the merely sequential cogitation of any man. The man who reasons according to a spiritual and gracious sense is convinced "of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness," and joined to that conviction is "an answerable frame of heart."[152] The spiritual exercise of reason is visible only when it is evident that one has based his behavior in the world on nothing that will work to his own gain, but rather looks outward with an obvious passion of self-denial.

But such self-denial is no ephemeral characteristic of the saints, Edwards tells us in the seventh sign, for one of the ways in which "gracious affections are distinguished from others, is, that they are attended with a change of nature."[153] If we remember that by nature Edwards is not referring to the substantive, physical presence of the person, but to what he habitually does, then we are instructed by this observation that the affec-

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[151] Ibid., p. 295.

[152] Ibid., p. 311.

[153] Ibid., p. 340.

tions which evidence a reasonable self-denial are authentic only when one persists in such self-denial--only when it has become further obvious that such self-denial as can be seen in him in the present is not merely for a greater self-gratification in the end. But self-denial, whether it be reasonable or no, is negative. Edwards does not intend this to be an action in itself, but rather to make room for what is the truly gracious action of the soul. And when we ask what that truly gracious action be, we remember that what is made visible in us is not simply our own actions, but by virtue of our union with Christ, we make him visible as well. Therefore, in the eighth sign, he tells us that "truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ; or, in other words, they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ."[154] How prominent the unio Christi theme is in Edwards appears here where instead of developing a picture of the exemplary relation between Christ and the believer he explains that it

> would be strange if Christians should not be of the same temper and spirit that Christ is of; when they are his flesh and his bone, yea are one spirit (I Cor. 6:17), and love so, that it is not they that live, but Christ that lives in them. A Christian spirit is

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[154] Ibid., p. 345.

> Christ's mark, that he sets upon the souls of his people; his seal is in their foreheads, bearing his image and superscription.[155]

Hardly indistinguishable from the eighth sign is the ninth: "Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit."[156]

When one looks over all of these signs and characteristics of true gracious affections, he will find that one of the ways in which they may be distinguished from false affections is their beautiful symmetry and proportion.

> In the truly holy affections of the saints is found that proportion which is the natural consequence of the universality of their sanctification. They have the whole image of Christ upon them: they have "put off the old man, and have put on the new man" entire in all his parts and members.[157]

Here Edwards is looking at the basic integrity of the exercise of true affections; there must be something about them that is convincing with regard to the continuity and consistency there is throughout the whole of a person's actions. And, moreover, there must appear in them, to be convincing, a spontaneity and an eagerness to continue in spiritual exercise. Gracious affections do not rest satisfied in themselves; on the contrary, "the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing

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[155] Ibid., p. 347.

[156] Ibid., p. 357.

[157] Ibid., p. 365.

of soul after spiritual attainments, increased."[158]

Above these eleven signs is erected still another: that perduring insistence of Edwards' that every influence of the spirit issue in holy practice. The twelfth sign is not so much in addition to those preceding it as it is a summary of all the others. It is that necessary condition without which it is meaningless to discuss the other signs. For to say that "gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice," is to imply three things of the saint:

> (1) That his behavior or practice in the world, be universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules. (2) That he makes a business of such a holy practice above all things; that it be a business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest earnestness and diligence: so that he may be said to make this practice of religion eminently his work and business. And (3) That he persists in it to the end of his life.[159]

This book combines the keen, empirical eye of the preacher who has spent the bulk of his mature years looking into the lives of his people to discern where and how his ministry is bearing fruit, with the agile, contemplative mind restlessly in search of greater clarity through distinction and definition. The maturity and the carefulness, the almost total absence of rancor, that characterize this volume make it difficult to deny that there could be a perspective from which the authenticity of the

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[158] Ibid., p. 376.

[159] Ibid., p. 383.

Christian life could be reasonably judged. Edwards does not once fall into cavilling narrowness or sheer, groundless assertion in this volume, nor is there once an absence of human sensitivity in the statement of his acute definitions and observations. It is a compassionate work by a reasonable man.

But, at the same time, the book is not so comprehensive that it deals with every important aspect of Edwards' theology, or even with the heart of his thought on the visibility of faith. There are three critical elements of that problem that are not touched on here; and those wait for several years until the shape of the human issues which they caused fully manifest themselves. These are the communal nature of the "reasonable judgment," the role of language, and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

2. The Church's Rational, Christian Judgment

If there is no way the authenticity of one's faith can be judged apart from its visibility then there is no hidden or private connection between any one man and the Holy Spirit that makes him more qualified than others to exercise the ecclesiastical authority to include or exclude souls from the gathered church. Since that judgment must be joined to enlightened observation its accuracy is more likely when there are many observers who share in the spirit of Christ. The communal nature of this proceeding is

stressed in the Humble Inquiry. In the "main question" he notes that it is the church's Christian judgment that is to be exercised.

> I say in the eye of the church's Christian judgment, because it is properly a visibility to the eye of the public charity, and not of a private judgment, that gives a person the right to be received as a visible saint by the public.[160]

It is primarily the private judgment of the minister against which Edwards wants to make this distinction, because the minister, in receiving one "to the communion of the church, is to act as a public officer, and in behalf of the public society, and not merely for himself, and therefore is to be governed in acting, by a proper visibility of godliness in the eye of the public."[161]

This judgment is relinquished to the church not merely because it is more likely to be accurate when made communally,[162] but because of the nature of the church itself. "Another evidence," Edwards says, "that such as are taken into the church, ought to be in the eye of a Christian truly gracious or pious persons, is this, that the Scripture represents the visible church of Christ as a society having its several members united by the bond of Christian brotherly love."[163] There is a distinguishing

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[160] Works, I, 92.

[161] Ibid., I, 92.

[162] Edwards thought the probability to be about ten to one. I, 93.

[163] Ibid., I. 142.

kind of affection saints have for one another--a oneness of heart, a philadelphia.[164] It is impossible that there exist such an affection toward brethren in Christ unless there be a sound apprehension or judgment of the mind as to the foundation of that affection.

> To say, that we must thus love others as visible members of Christ, if anything else be meant than that we must love them because they are visibly, or as they appear to our judgment, real members of Christ, is in effect to say, that we must thus love them without any foundation at all.[165]

3. The Integrity of Profession

Continuous with the communal nature of judging qualifications for inclusion into the church body is Edwards' strong demand that visibility be attended with oral profession. The real reason for the connection between visibility and profession is not immediately apparent in the Humble Inquiry. In addition to his feeling that there seems to be an obvious connection between having a proper respect for Christ and professing one,[166] Edwards rolls out a catalogue of scriptural evidence for it. Scripture consistently pictures a duty one has for professing his piety, verbally uniting himself to God's covenant. Swearing by God in the Old Testament was an emphatic way for a person to express his becoming one

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[164] Ibid., I, 142.

[165] Ibid., I, 144.

[166] Ibid., I, 119.

of God's people. In the New Testament baptism is *eis to onoma*.[167]

Edwards enters into an analysis of the function of language in this issue no deeper than to make the uninteresting observation that words stand for things, and that the profession of the saints is nothing but the external, audible description of their acceptance of Christ.[168] What *is* interesting in this discussion is his repeated claim that the Lord's Supper is a confessing ordinance, for this controverts the popular doctrine of his grandfather that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance. The heart of his case against this older position is that the words and actions of the Lord's Supper, as well as those professions of the saints, lose their signification. If it be granted that there is no *reliable* connection between profession and true piety, then

> whatever some of the words and signs in themselves most properly and naturally import or signify, they entirely cease to be significations of any such thing among people accustomed to understand and use them otherwise; and so cease to be of the nature of a profession of Christian piety.[169]

Even if the communicant be accepted on the basis that he *promises* obedience to the covenant *hereafter*, there is no proper owning of the covenant for one must consent *now* and must make some visibility of it. Edwards gives force

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[167] *Ibid.*, I, 106.

[168] *Ibid.*, I, 145.

[169] *Ibid.*, I, 100.

to this argument through comparison with the marriage covenant in which one's vow does not mean faithfulness and obedience in marriage sometime in the future, but it means that the vow expresses a present intention to it.[170]

How exclusive Edwards means to be in his teaching that the Lord's Supper is a professing ordinance becomes evident in his answer to an imagined objection: One might say that a common faith and moral sincerity are sufficient qualifications since each person who comes to the table does so as a member of the church which is the "school of Christ" and therefore they come not as perfect Christians but as learners.[171] He breaks this down with the analogy of the king who puts his children in a school to teach them princely behavior; the king did not put them in that school to make them royal. A common faith will not do. A saving faith is required for admission to the table even if the church be understood as the school of Christ, because one must submit himself wholly to Christ as his master and teacher, obeying the laws of his school. The Lord's Supper is the profession of such an acceptance.[172]

Solomon Williams was commissioned to write the reply to the Humble Inquiry. He chose to attack Edwards generally in the area in which Edwards' argument rested

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[170] Ibid., I, 112f.

[171] Ibid., I, 149.

[172] Ibid., I, 150.

on the connection between words and the things they signified. Although Edwards' sense of justice was ignited by Williams' "misrepresentations" of the argument, and although he felt that his protests against the Humble Inquiry failed "whether it be in begging the question, or being impertinent and beside the question,"[173] Williams aimed, albeit accidentally, at the vulnerable heel. And we may be grateful for this because it drove Edwards to a greater clarity in this matter than we might otherwise have had.

In answer to Williams' general claim that words can be used in such a way that we cannot tell whether they signify a saving faith, Edwards says,

> a profession made in words that are neither equivocal, or general, equally signifiying several distinct things, without any marks of difference or distinction, by which we are enabled to judge which is meant, is not a profession or signification or any one of those several things; nor can they afford any rational ground of understanding or apprehending any particular thing. Thus, for instance, if a man, using an equivocal term, should say, that such an evening a king was in that room, without any marks of difference or discrimination whatsoever, by which others could discern whether by a king, he meant the ruler of a kingdom, or a king used in a game of chess: the word thus used would be no declaration that the head of a kingdom was there at such a time; nor would they give any notice of any such thing to those to whom he spoke, or give them any rational ground to understand or judge any such thing.[174]

Here he is only insisting on the clarity of signification. The words must leave no question in the minds of the hearer what they are meant to signify. Thus what the communicant

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is inte [173]"Misrepresentations Corrected, and Truth Vindicated," Works, I, 195.

[174]Ibid., I, 220.

is intended to signify in his profession is not the promise that he has saving grace, nor is the possibility that he has it. It is saving faith itself that the profession is meant to signify. Now, of course, Edwards is not so naive as to think that false professions cannot be convincing to the hearer, but he does not want the possibility of that to encourage the church to abandon a literal interpretation of professions. What especially piques Edwards is the seemingly decent advice of Williams that "charity obliges the church to understand the words of professors in the most favorable sense." This is quickly overturned.

> If a man that is indebted to me professes that he has either gold or brass, which he promises to pay me; or if he uses an equivocal term, that equally, and without marks of difference, signifies either one or the other: charity may oblige me to believe what he says, which is that he has either gold or brass; but no charity obliges me to believe that he has gold, which he does not say.[175]

Edwards will not put literal signification aside in the interest of charity, for what is lost then is the meaningfulness of that particular discourse altogether. "But how can one possibly know whether the observed faith be the true gold of the Holy Spirit or the brass of a common and graceless exercise?" we can almost imagine Williams asking as he reads this reply to his attack. It is not for another sixty pages that Edwards will turn to

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[175] Ibid., I, 222.

this question, but even then the contemporary reader may not have been struck with the adequacy of the answer. The reason of mankind, he wrote, teaches us

> the need of joining words and actions together in public manifestations of the mind, in cases of importance: speech being the great and peculiar talent, which God has given to mankind, as the special means and instrument of the manifestation of their minds one to another.[176]

The meaningfulness of words can be sustained only when they can be identified with particular kinds of human action. Edwards could see in this issue how easily the words of profession could be sundered from the visible actions of the saints and be made to apply chiefly to the invisible. Once that which is signified by the words disappears from public recognition then there is no particular kind of human behavior that need go with those words. The church will become a community of individuals who use many of the same sentences, but who use them without having to examine the nature of their lives, who need never ask whether they be in meeting-house or town meeting. Therefore, the whole realm of divinity and the whole of scripture would have nothing directly to do with what the people of Christ actually did. Unless Edwards could keep the visible church clearly in view and clearly enough defined as to make it publicly recognisable, he knew that there was no possibility of convicting his brethren of their guilt since the scripture language about a just God

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[176] Ibid., I, 282.

could refer to any inward state; and for that reason there was no possibility that the excellency of Christ appear to that people, since having no sense of their guilt they could not see how he was like them in his suffering.

4. The Lord's Supper

The reason all of this comes to an issue in the debate over qualifications for communion is that the Lord's Supper, for Edwards, is made up of those verbal and non-verbal signs which point most directly to the meeting of the believer with his Lord. In what might be considered the locus classicus of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper Edwards manages in several sentences to weave together the several themes we have been pursuing throughout the course of this study: the visibility of the saints, the visibility of Christ, their union of heart by means of profession, and, as though it were the one term that includes all the others, the covenant.

> Christ, by the speeches and actions of the minister, makes a solemn profession of his part in the covenant of grace: he exhibits the sacrifice of his body broken and his blood shed; and in the minister's offering the sacramental bread and wine to the communicants, Christ presents himself to the believing communicants, as their propitiation and bread of life; and by these outward signs confirms and seals his sincere engagements to be their Saviour and food, and to impart to them all the benefits of his propitiation and salvation. And they, in receiving what is offered, and eating and drinking the symbols of Christ's body and blood, also profess to embrace the promises and lay hold of the hope set before them, to receive the atonement, to receive Christ as their spiritual food, and to

> feed upon him in their hearts by faith. Indeed what is professed on both sides is the heart: for Christ in offering himself, professes the willingness of his heart to be theirs who truly receive him, and the communicants on their part, profess the willingness of their hearts to receive him, which they declare by significant actions.[177]

It is perhaps nowhere more evident than in his sacramental doctrine how profoundly the childhood discoveries of Edwards affected his mature thought. By having circumvented the treacherous metaphysical shoals of substantialist thinking, he was not only safe from the endless windings of the orthodox doctrine of the person, states and work of Christ, but he also managed to write a complete description of the Lord's Supper without having to deal with the modes of presence. It is not the substance of Christ that is important in the eucharist, but rather the appearance of Christ. At the same time, even though Edwards had a rather pronounced sense of the course of history that lay between himself and the actual events described in scripture, his philosophical bearings allowed him to maneuver easily without having to account for that gap. There is no sense in any of this sacramental discussion that the signs and the words are a reenactment of the real event which had already been performed. The Lord's Supper is not a memorial. It does not yield to the past.

With this doctrine we reach the summit of Edwards' christology since from here all of it can be seen from a

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[177] "Humble Inquiry," Works, I, 145.

single vantage. Christ is present in the Lord's Supper not because we share in the timeless reality of pure being, but because he appears to us in the spoken words of the minister. But he appears to us there only if those words are set in the communal context of the church which as a body manifests the spirit of Christ. Christ must be apparent in the lives of the visible saints--outside that appearance we cannot know him. But he does not appear in that communal life unless there is evidenced there a radical virtue which is identical to his perfect excellence. The church, in all its historical and human incompleteness, is Christ before the world. And Christ is not seen unless the church becomes visible.

5. Conclusion

In concluding our discussion of Edwards' christology as it emerges from this discussion of sanctification, it should once more be observed how tightly he has bound the objective to the subjective, the inner to the outer, the inherent to the external. Sanctification is a theological discussion that traditionally focuses on the inner movements of the soul in response to the divine action, and while Edwards leads us there also we never succeed in taking our eye off him who was made our sanctification. Certainly he shares this theological characteristic with his Puritan forbears, but it is not for

his faithfulness to that tradition alone that he repeats the theme of visible sanctification, for as we have tried to show it grows just as legitimately out of his own philosophical thought. In either case, there is no denying the final observation that that theology is wonderfully made which can combine within the category of sanctification both the description of the gracious soul and the external basis on which the authenticity of its spiritual exercises can be ascertained.

The union with Christ which results from Christ's work of redemption is nothing if it does not issue in virtue. But there is no true virtue that is not visible. And visibility requires profession, for if ever the language of scripture and divinity become sundered from the visible actions of men then the language loses its meaning and the standards for applying praise and blame vanish. And insofar as language is meaningful only when it is associated with human actions the supreme use of verbal and non-verbal language is the Lord's Supper, for it is there that the consenting union of Christ and the soul is publicly expressed; it is there that Christ and the saints "own the covenant" with each other.

CHAPTER V

MADE UNTO US REDEMPTION

When Edwards comes to the fourth term in Paul's sentence, his introductory remark is that, "it is by Christ that we have redemption or actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness, and glory." In the first of those sermons he intended later to publish on the subject of redemption, he led his congregation through several suggestive definitions and distinctions concerning the term. "The work of redemption and the work of salvation," he explained, "are the same thing. What is sometimes called God's saving his people, is in other places called his redeeming them. So Christ is called both the Saviour and the Redeemer of his people."[1] This identification of salvation with redemption was intended not merely to accord with the nomenclature of scripture, but also to bring his subject matter into the focus of the text he had chosen for this ambitious work:

> For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation. (Isaiah 51:8)

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[1] "History of Redemption," Works, I, 299.

What no doubt caused Edwards to seize upon this text was the expression, "from generation to generation." There is no concern in the sermons that follow with God's eternal and unchanging righteousness; the emphasis rather is on the manifestation of that righteousness within the context of human history.

This being the case, we might then ask how we are to distinguish between redemption and sanctification. So far as both terms can be defined as the inherent of that for which righteousness is the objective aspect, there is no substantial difference between the terms. But in his overall use of them we find that the two terms function quite differently in Edwards' work. How he intends to use the term "redemption" is already suggested in the initial remark in the Boston lecture. There he makes it equivalent to actual deliverance from misery, and to the bestowment of all happiness and glory. When he talks about redemption he is talking about an active process or narrative in which the actual possession of saving grace is chronicled. His references to sanctification are made in quite another temper. There he is concerned with the timeless fact that when the forces of grace meet with the sinful though penitent soul a certain transformation of the soul will occur, as it were, according to eternal principles. In discussing redemption his eye falls on the relativities that obtain between the saved soul and the world around him, between the circumstances of salvation and the conditions immediately

preceding or succeeding it. This is why he will often refer to the "work" of salvation, or to the "history" of the work of redemption. Both redemption and sanctification are firmly within the historical limits of human experience, but the latter is the history of a single soul, and the former the comprehensive history of the divine struggle for every soul.[2] When he considers the matter of redemption he is looking into the grand design of God in general,

> as it respects the universal subject and end, is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world in a different manner, not merely by repeating or renewing the same effect in the different subjects of it, but by many successive works and dispensations of God, all tending to one great end and effect, all united as the several parts of a scheme, and all together making up one great work.[3]

A. Redemption as History

But even when this use of the word "redemption" has been made clear there is still one more possible source of confusion in it which Edwards deals with in the prefatory remarks of the first sermon. There are two possible ways of interpreting the term, he says. It can be applied in the "restrained sense" in which we see the work as "begun and finished with Christ's humiliation." In that

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[2]This was the same concept of redemption with which the Westminster divines worked. Cf., "Westminster Confession," VIII, vi, Schaff, III, 621f.

[3]"History of Redemption," Works, I, 302.

case, we should talk about only what was wrought while Christ was on earth. "And so we say, that the day of Christ's resurrection is the day when Christ finished the work of redemption, i.e., then the purchase was finished, and the work itself, and all that appertained to it, was virtually done and finished, but not actually."[4] Edwards is not suggesting here that Christ did not do all that he needed to do during his humiliation, but that the total execution of that work of which his humiliation was a part is not confined to that one historical period nor to the physical presence of Christ. The actual redemption is carried on by Christ through his Spirit, and therefore if the term is taken in its larger sense, as Edwards wishes to now, "including all that God works or accomplishes tending to this end," then the drama is eternal and the cast includes the whole of the trinity along with the whole of mankind.

> The whole dispensation, as it includes the preparation and the purchase, and the application and success of Christ's redemption, is here called the work of redemption. All that Christ does in this great affair as mediator, in any of his offices, either of prophet, priest, or king; either when he was in this world, in his human nature, or before, or since; and not only what Christ the mediator has done, but also what the Father, or the Holy Ghost, have done, as united or confederated in this design of redeeming sinful men; or, in one word, all that is wrought in execution of the eternal covenant of redemption.[5]

By regarding redemption as a narrative or a history

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[4] Ibid., I, 299.

[5] Ibid., I, 299.

on such a grand scale, there is another dimension added to our understanding of it. As we saw above, the covenant in Edwards' theology is the concept which expresses the intentionality both of God and man. To say that the redemption is all that God has wrought in the execution of his eternal covenant is to say that the history of that redemption will evidence the precise intentionality of God; that history will itself be the expression of God's own highest good. It will have, in other words, a particular design. Still in the preface of the History of Redemption Edwards roughs out "the main things to be accomplished in the great work."[6]

The first thing designed in this work is putting "all God's enemies under his feet. . . . that the goodness of God should finally appear triumphing over all evil." The history tells of a combat between God and the gathered forces of evil; and the battle is fierce even to the day of his writing, Edwards will tell us. Secondly, "in doing this God's design was perfectly to restore all the ruins of the fall, so far as concerns the elect part of the world, by his Son."[7] The elect are to have a new body like Christ's glorified body, and the world, since it was also ruined, will be restored; there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Then all elect creatures in heaven and in e

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[6]Ibid., I, 302.

[7]Ibid., I, 303.

earth will come "to a union one to another in one body, under one head, and to unity all together in one body to God the Father." This was begun right after the fall and will be carried on until the end of the world. Then the elect and the church will be glorified.[8]

Both of these are but aspects of one great design; they are but phases of that one consistent expression of what is for God the most apparent good: "In all this God designed to accomplish the glory of the blessed Trinity in an exceeding degree. God had a design of glorifying himself from eternity; to glorify each person in the Godhead."[8]

If Edwards' conception of this history is grand and sweeping, it is also extremely vivid, specific, and dramatic. He sees the whole of it to fall into three larger periods. The first begins with the fall and ends with the incarnation. It is during this time that God was doing those things preparatory to Christ's coming, and working out redemption." Then he takes up in most precise detail the purchase of redemption in what he called the "restrained sense" of the word: from the incarnation to the resurrection. The third period takes us from the resurrection to the end of the world. This last period is "all taken up in bringing about or accomplishing the great effect or success of that purchase," and is painted

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[8]Ibid., I, 304.

in the brilliant shapes Edwards takes from the Johannine Apocalypse.[9]

The redemption proper begins with the fall. Immeddately upon Adam's lapse

> Christ the eternal Son of God clothed himself with the mediatorial character, and therein presented himself before the Father. He immediately stepped in between a holy, infinite, offended majesty, and offending mankind; and was accepted in his interposition; and so wrath was prevented from going forth in the full execution of that amazing curse that man had brought on himself.[10]

Edwards does not want to suggest that nothing was done in order to the redemption before the fall. There was a covenant of redemption "confederated" in the trinity from all eternity. There was the creation of heaven and hell which are also eternal and were planned in the clear knowledge of the eventual outcome. Moreover, he does not want us to think that it will all cease with the end of the world. "The greatest fruits of all will be after that." The work of redemption, he tries to explain, "is not an eternal work, i.e., it is not a work always a doing and never accomplished. But the fruits of this work are eternal fruits."[11]

Edwards' insistence on the actuality of the redemption gives him severe difficulties in the period between the fall and the incarnation. He is forced into the corner of

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[9] Ibid., I, 305.

[10] Ibid., I, 306.

[11] Ibid., I, 300.

arguing that the visible church started also right after the fall. "God wrought salvation for the souls of men through all that space of time, though the number was very small to what it was afterwards."[12] The question is not whether God is able to do this, but whether Edwards does not find himself with another theory as to the manner of the redemption, for elsewhere the redemption is possible only when the saints have a view of Christ either in the flesh or through the scriptural account of his person and actions. Those previous to the incarnation have neither of these.

Edwards' writing here is crude and unfinished, but it is nonetheless interesting to see how he deals with this problem. He appeals to the traditional doctrine of the offices of Christ. When Christ stepped between the offender and the offended,

> he took on him the care of fallen man in the exercise of all his offices; he undertook thenceforward to teach mankind in the exercise of his prophetical office; and he took on him, as it were, the care and burden of the church, and of the world of mankind, from this day forward.[13]

In the first subdivision of the time intervening between the fall and the incarnation which includes all that transpired between the fall and the flood, Edwards makes an orderly use of the mediatorial offices. Christ first acts in the prophetic office in the proto-evangellion

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[12] Ibid., I, 305.

[13] Ibid., I, 307.

(Genesis 3:15), where in God's promise to put enmity between the serpent and the seed of Eve Edwards finds "a certain intimation of merciful design. . . . which was like the first glimmerings of the light of the sun in the east when the day first dawns."[14] The priestly office of Christ is not exercised so directly, but rather is shadowed in the institution of liturgical sacrifice. The custom of sacrificing was appointed, Edwards says, "to be a standing type of the sacrifice of Christ till he should come, and offer up himself a sacrifice to God."[15] The sacrifices were the main devices by which the work of Christ was foretold; "it tended to establish in the minds of God's visible church, the necessity of a propitiatory sacrifice, in order to the Deity's being satisfied for sin." But it is not only within the church that sacrifice had become a custom. "No nation, however barbarous, was found without it anywhere." By this means there was no one in the world who did not know that "an atonement or sacrifice for sin was necessary; and a way was made for their more readily receiving the great doctrine of the gospel of Christ, which teaches us the atonement and sacrifice of Christ."[16]

It is usually made clear in the orthodox expression

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[14] Ibid., I, 308f.

[15] Ibid., I, 309.

[16] Ibid., I, 311.

of this doctrine that the offices are not separate but are rather all aspects of the one mediatorial office, therefore, the exercise of one must coincide with the exercise of the others. Thus in Edwards the kingly office begins immediately. It is probable that Adam and Eve were the first fruits of the redemption; there were numerous instances of mercy to them in the course of their lives. Abel, too, was saved.[17] And as we follow the scriptural narrative through this first sub-period there is a marked progress in the work of redemption. There is a remarkable outpouring of the spirit in the days of Enos.[18] Then we have the story of Enoch who "was a saint of greater eminency than any ever had been before him; so that in this respect the work of redemption was carried on to a greater height than ever it had been before."[19] When Enoch walked with God and was taken up into heaven, the work progressed even farther.

Of course, the flood may appear to be a reversal of this story, but in fact it is not because there is a remarkable saving of the seed of the holy family in it,[20] and also there was an advance of the redemption insofar as "God removed out of the way the enemies and obstacles

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[17] Ibid., I, 311f.

[18] Ibid., I, 313.

[19] Ibid., I, 314.

[20] Ibid., I, 316.

of it, that were ready to overthrow it."[21] But with the flood there was a new covenant of grace made with Noah and through him with his descendants.[22] God Promised "to destroy the earth in like manner no more; signifying how that it is by the sacrifice of Christ that God's favor is obtained."[23] This renewal of the covenant marks the beginning of a new period, or dispensation, in God's plan, which continues apace until the idolatry of God's people causes him to renew the covenant again--this time with Abraham.

This new expression of the covenant is sufficient from the time of Abraham to the time of Moses; then from Moses to David there is another dispensation; and from David to the Babylonian exile. The final period of preparation is that which lies between the exile and the incarnation. In this last period Edwards apparently feels that the paucity of information available in scripture allows him to wander into other sources of knowledge about the history of that period of the world. From scripture he charts the final preparation of the people of God, now humiliated before all the principalities of the world by their exile; so that with their pride sufficiently mortified, they were ready for Christ. From other

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[21] Ibid., I, 318.

[22] Ibid., I, 319.

[23] Ibid., I, 320.

sources he opines that the world, too, was thoroughly prepared. The four great revolutions--Babylonian, Assyrian, Greek and Roman--that swept over the world "like the four winds striving together on the tumultuous raging ocean," will show us that "all things are ready for the birth of Christ."[24]

The orderliness Edwards was able to sustain through the first sub-period decays as he races over the others. The account is rapid, broadly painted, and based on a surprisingly loose treatment of the scriptural accounts. He loses, in the obvious haste of his writing, any clear sense of the manner of redemption through this period. He wants always to show that the visible church is growing either in size or in holiness, but precisely how it is that Christ is the agent of its redemption is often left in obscurity. The more reasonable structure of the offices is virtually abandoned. By the time we get to the New Testament there is scarcely another reference to the three-fold mediatorial office.

B. The Typology of History

There is, however, one methodological device used consistently throughout his interpretation of the Old Testament material--typology. Although a typological exegetical

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[24] Ibid., I, 388.

method was already long in use by Edwards' time, it still should be seen that his own christology, inasmuch as it rested on Christ's appearing to the understanding as the greatest good, made it additionally attractive to him. If Christ could not appear in the flesh or in the word, he could appear under one or another sort of type. According to his own explanation in a volume on the types of Christ, published in Dwight's edition of his works,

> we find that it was God's manner throughout the ages of the Old Testament, to typify future things, not only as he signified them by symbolical and typical representations in those visions and prophecies in which they were revealed, but also as he made use of those things that had an actual existence, to typify them, either by events that he brought to pass by his special providence to that end, or by things that he appointed and commanded to be done for that end.[25]

In the History of Redemption he pauses once to give "type" a more systematic character.

> The types of Christ were of three sorts; types of institution or instituted types, and providential, and personal types. The ordinance of sacrificing was the greatest of the instituted types; and the redemption out of Egypt was the greatest of the providential types; and David the greatest of the personal types.[26]

Usually, however, he does not appear to be under the guidance of any theory about the distinctions between types. Edwards' writings on the Old Testament literature abound in typological analysis, and for the most part it

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[25] Works of President Edwards, ed. Sereno Dwight (New York: S. Converse, 1829-1830), IX, 10.

[26] "History of Redemption," Works, I, 348.

seems as though he takes an unrestrained delight in allowing his imagination to wander where it will, without its usual disciplined application to that which is empirically observed. The story of Noah, for example, ran thick with types for Edwards.

> That water that washed away the filth of the world, that cleared the world of wicked men, was a type of the blood of Christ, that takes away the sin of the world. That water that delivered Noah and his sons from their enemies, is a type of the blood that delivers God's church from their sins, their worst enemies. That water that was so plentiful and abundant, that it filled the world, and reached above the tops of the highest mountains, was a type of that blood, the sufficiency of which is so abundant, that it is sufficient for the whole world; sufficient to bury the highest mountains of sin. The ark that was the refuge and hiding place of the church in this time of storm and flood, was a type of Christ, the true hiding place of the church, from the storms and floods of God's wrath.[27]

There is almost nothing in the Old Testament from which he withholds his typological analysis. Even Adam is a type of Christ. His awakening in the second chapter of Genesis is a type of Christ's resurrection; his receiving Eve is a type for Christ's receiving the church.[28] Jacob is a type of Christ. His dream of the ladder foretells Christ's opening heaven to the saints.[29] The ascent of the ark typifies Christ's ascension, and the redemption from Babylon is a type of the redemption of the church.[30] Christ is the antitype for Moses and Aaron, while Absalom

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[27] Ibid., I, 319.

[28] "Annotations on Scripture," Grosart, p. 59.

[29] Ibid., p. 67.

[30] "Thoughts on the Revival," Works, III, 321ff.

is a type of the antichrist.[31]

And Edwards accepts without questioning it the practice of considering Jehovah as the Old Testament name for Christ. Reflecting on this in one of the entries in the Miscellanies he decides that the

> WORK OF CREATION'S being ascribed to X does most evidently prove the proper divinity of X. For God declares that He is Jehovah that stretched forth the heavens alone, & spread abroad the earth by himself.[32]

A slight modification of the typological scheme results in what Edwards refers to as "images and shadows of divine things" and is no longer confined to the Old Testament. It is in the execution of this thought that Edwards comes closest to a logos christology.

> he who by his imediate influence gives being every moment, and by his spirit actuates the world, because he inclines to communicate himself and his excellencies, doth doubtless communicate his excellency to bodies as far as there is any consent or analogy. . . . So that when we are delighted with flowery meadows & gentle breezes or wind we may consider that we only see the emanations of the sweet benevolence of Jesus X. when we behold the fragrant rose and lily, we see his love, and purity. . . . There are also many things wherein we may behold his awfull majesty. in the sun in his strength, in comets, in thunder, in the hovering thunder clouds in ragged rocks, and the brows of mountains.[33]

In the single folio of such reflections taken from the Yale manuscripts and published by Perry Miller, there appears without interpretation the elegant line: "The mole

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[31] "Observations on Passages of Scripture," Works, III, 549.

[32] Yale MSS, No. 1349.

[33] Ibid., No. 108.

opens not his eyes till he be dead."[34]

But, as we have already observed, Edwards does not develop these logos christological themes in his thought. And as for the typological exegetical method which is indirectly related to such themes, we must conclude that for all the space he gives to this kind of analysis of the Old Testament, he still teaches nothing new about Christ by means of it. Seen from the point of view of that toward which the types point, they are nothing but a tireless repetition of the same themes--almost all of them dealing with some aspect of the work of redemption. Edwards could hardly have defended their use on that basis. If he had in mind anything more than keeping alive the traditional typological method of scriptural interpretation, it was probably nothing but trying to discover precisely what sort of light was available to the understandings of the Old Testament people. It would work considerable embarrassment to his keenly historical conception of the progress of redemption if there were not at least sufficient ground to hold all men in all ages, whatever the source of their wisdom, capable of responding to the truth about God.

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[34]Images or Shadows of Divine Things (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), No. 179.

C. The Future as History

Whatever the defectiveness of the typological method we are saved from having to make any extensive use of it in a study of Edwards' christology by the simple fact that when he resumes his story of the redemption after the incarnation the method disappears. As we saw in the second chapter Edwards' treatment of the scriptural account of the purchase itself, i.e., the period from the incarnation to the resurrection, is solidly based on his own philosophical and theological foundations. When we pass on beyond the resurrection into the third large period of the whole work--that space of time which is "all taken up in bringing about the great effect or success of Christ's purchase"--we come upon a narrative centering on the struggle between Christ and the anti-christ.

For this combat both Christ and the church are well prepared. It is the resurrection and the ascension by which Christ was advantageously placed for the coming encounter.

> In order that Christ might carry on the work of redemption, and accomplish the success of his own purchase as God-man, it was necessary that he should be alive, and so that he should rise from the dead. Therefore Christ, after he had finished this purchase by death, and by continuing for a time under the power of death, rises from the dead, to fulfill the end of his purchase, and himself to bring about that for which he died.[35]

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[35] "History of Redemption," Works, I, 431.

But the resurrection alone is not sufficient, for Christ needs more than life; power, too, must be his.

> Christ's ascension into heaven was, as it were, his solemn enthronization, whereby the Father did set him upon the throne and invest him with the glory of his kingdom which he had purchased for himself, that he might thereby obtain the success of his redemption in conquering all his enemies. . . . And as he ascended into heaven, God the Father did in a visible manner set him on the throne as king of the universe. He then put the angels all under him, and subjected heaven and earth under him, that he might govern them for the good of the people for whom he had died.[36]

With Christ in possession of life and power the church was then given the necessary means of success for its struggle in the world. The Jewish dispensation was ended; after Christ the Jewish dispensation was not adequate, since the people of God were no longer to consist of one nation, but would rather be taken from all the nations of the world. Then the Christian Sabbath was established; the gospel ministry appointed and sent forth; the apostles were endowed with extraordinary gifts of healing and prophecy; all those things were revealed which had been hidden in the Old Testament; Paul was converted; councils were convened; and finally the New Testament was committed to writing.[37]

Now that the visible people of God were equipped with all the weaponry necessary for their visible victory in the world, they proceed at once to battle with Christ at their head, for the antichrist is already in the field.

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[36] Ibid., I, 432f.

[37] Ibid., I, 434ff.

Looking ahead at the long drama now before the church Edwards says,

> here it is worthy to be remembered that the Christian church, during its continuance under means of grace, is in two very different states. 1. In a suffering, afflicted, persecuted state; as, for the most part it is, from the resurrection of Christ till the fall of the Antichrist. 2. In a state of peace and prosperity; which is the state that the church, for the most part, is to be in after the fall of Antichrist.[38]

In the first of these states the church achieves some gain with the fall of Jerusalem in 68 A.D., but now "the devil turns his hand elsewhere, and uses other instruments."[39] These instruments are the pagan learning and the political power of the Roman Empire which were exercised against the Christians with great fury until the time of Constantine's conversion in 320. But Satan's employment of the Roman Empire was ended with the emperor's seizing on Christ, and for a while there was great peace accompanied by the remarkable scenes of the heathen emperors, princes and generals who had persecuted the Christians, "dying miserably, one and another, under exquisite torments of body, and horrors of conscience, with a most visible hand of God upon them."[40]

But Satan was still not undone; he turned now to the church and began to infest that. "The Arians began soon after Constantine came to the throne." Then in the next

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[38] Ibid., I, 437.

[39] Ibid., I, 445.

[40] Ibid., I, 449.

century he appeared in the Pelagian heresy, and in the apostasy of Julian. So the respite was brief, "as it were for half an hour, wherein the four angels held the four winds from blowing, till the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads."[41] By the time of the Reformation the success of the Antichrist had been almost complete. But then "God began gloriously to revive his church again, and advance the kingdom of his Son, after such a dismal night of darkness as had been before from the rise of Antichrist to that time."[42] Although Satan was severely attacked in this period he responded vigorously with the Council of Trent, then with savage warfare, persecution, and corrupt opinions.[43]

As Edwards draws close to the present day in his narrative he notes a certain series of encouraging signs in the world: there is a growth of Christianity in Muscovy, an extensive propogation of the gospel in America and also in Malabar. "There has not long since been a remarkable revival of the power and practice of religion in Saxony in Germany, through the endeavors of an eminent divine there, whose name was August Herman Frank."[44] But all in all, there has been about as much gain in the years since the Reformation as there has been loss. The Reformed church

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[41] Ibid., I, 454.

[42] Ibid., I, 462.

[43] Ibid., I, 463.

[44] Ibid., I, 469.

has diminished and morals have disintegrated.[45] However, on the other hand, the power of the Pope has also faded; there is less persecution now than there was, and there is a great increase in learning.[46] What therefore does the future hold?

Edwards' source of knowledge about future events is chiefly those writings of the Apostle John, for it was to this "beloved disciple. . . . that Christ revealed those wonderful things which were to come to pass in his church to the end of time."[47] In the miscellaneous notes which concern themselves with predicting the future, and in the 208 page manuscript Edwards bound himself, the "Notes on the Apocalypse," it is the name of Moses Lowman more than any other that is invoked as an authority. In Lowman's own book on the Apocalypse he enunciates the principle that

> the perpetual use of prophecy to the church in all ages, the wisdom and goodness of prividing such support to the faith and constancy of the church, in every state of affliction, which seems to be the design, and therefore the true key of the whole Revelation, makes it probable that the spirit of prophecy did not design this support for the church in a few of the first ages of Christianity only, but that it designed the same consolation and support for every after-age; that the faithfulness and power of God would, in all times, verify these truths.[48]

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[45] Ibid., I, 470

[46] Ibid., I, 471.

[47] Ibid., I, 437.

[48] A Paraphrase, Notes, and Observations, upon the Revelation of St. John, the Divine, Apostle, and Evangelist (London: 1790), p. 9.

In apparent agreement with this principle, Edwards finds evidence in scripture that very soon in this current dark period "the Spirit of God shall be gloriously poured out for the wonderful revival and propagation of religion." Great multitudes will be brought "to forsake that vice and wickedness which now so generally prevails, and shall cause that vital religion which is now so despised and laughed at in the world, to revive."[49] His vision of this affair is controlled throughout by his sense of its historical development; it "will not be accomplished at once, as by some great miracle, as the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world will be all at once; but this is a work which will be accomplished by means, by the preaching of the gospel, and the use of the ordinary means of grace, and so shall be gradually brought to pass."[50]

One of the most significant features of Edwards' historical account of that time remaining between now and the end is that for him there will be a kingdom established on earth, before the church is glorified in heaven. It is toward that end that the current growth in religion is tending, but the imminent "pouring out of the Spirit of God will not effect the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom, till there has first been a violent and

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[49] "History of Redemption," Works, I, 482.

[50] Ibid., I, 481.

mighty opposition made."[51] There will be a final struggle between these two visible kingdoms "called the battle of the great day of God Almighty." The armies in this struggle shall be made up of those who are on the sides of Christ or Satan. And everyone will be on one side or another; there will be no "neuters." But the outcome is not uncertain: "Christ and his church shall in this battle obtain a complete and entire victory over their enemies."[52] The visible saints shall thereupon enter into that "state of peace and propperity" which characterizes the second part of the great period from the incarnation to the end of history. But still, there is, of course, no diminution of the historical nature of this period. It will be the same world with the same dimensions; but a world without evil. It will be a time of great light and knowledge. "It may be hoped, that then many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines, and that excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Tartary, and other of now the most barbarous countries."[53] It will be a time of great holiness. "Religion shall not be an empty profession, as it now mostly is, but holiness of heart and life shall abundantly prevail."[54] There will be peace and love everywhere; wars

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[51] Ibid., I, 483.

[52] Ibid., I, 484.

[53] Ibid., I, 491.

[54] Ibid., I, 492.

between nations will be replaced with good understanding. "Then shall all the world be united in one amiable society."[55] In another work Edwards says it is a modest estimate that at the end of this period the number of converts on earth will have been multiplied by some 100,000.[56]

It would appear that he spent a rather large number of pleasant hours in his study musing over the delights of life in the visible kingdom of Christ on earth. There are frequent references to the "Millenium" in the Miscellanies.

> How happy will that state be when neither divine nor human learning shall be confined and imprisoned within only two or three nations of Europe, but shall be diffused all over the world, and this lower world shall be all over covered with light, the various parts of it mutually lighting each other. . . . and the press shall groan in wild Tartary.[57]

We are repeatedly reminded in these ruminations that spiritual blessings will not be enlarged without the corresponding developments in the secular sphere.

> 'Tis probable that the world shall be more like Heaven in the millenium in this respect: that contemplation and spiritual employments, and those things that more directly concern the mind and religion, will be more the saints' ordinary business than now. There will be so many contrivances and inventions to facilitate and expedite their necessary secular business that they

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[55] Ibid., I, 493.

[56] "An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer," Works, III, 449.

[57] Townsend, No. 26.

> shall have more time for more noble exercise. . . . The invention of the mariner's compass is a thing discovered by God to the world to that end. And how exceedingly has that one thing enlarged and facilitated communication. And who can doubt but that yet God will make it more perfect, so that there need not be such a tedious voyage in order to hear from the other hemisphere? And so the country about the poles need no longer be hid to us, but the whole earth may be as one community, one body in Christ.[58]

Edwards' depiction of the kingdom is credible. It is the view that in the course of a man's life on this planet he can participate in the triumph of good over evil; and even though we might know that trans-oceanic jets and extraordinarily accurate guidance systems are no sure harbingers of peace, Edwards still succeeds in teaching any who choose to live under the kingship of Christ that there is no redemption unless actual hearts are made to turn actual airplanes into instruments of peace. Not even in his most romantic, utopian moments will Edwards replace responsible, visible action in the world with the private ecstacies of communion with the most high.[59]

But the earthly millenium will not last forever. We do not know how long it will be exactly; scripture says only that it will be a long time.[60] But we do know

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[58] Ibid., No. 262.

[59] Commenting on this part of Edwards' thought from another perspective C.C. Goen says his "proposal of an imminent millenium within ordinary history was a definitive factor in the religious background of the idea of progress." "Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure in Eschatology," Church History, XXVII (March, 1959), p. 26.

[60] "History of Redemption," Works, I, 494.

that just "before the end of the world, there shall be a very great apostasy, wherein great parts of the world shall fall away from Christ and his church."

> Satan shall begin to set up his dominion again in the world. This world shall again become a scene of darkness and wickedness. The bottomless pit of hell shall be opened, and devils shall come up again out of it, and a dreadful smoke shall ascend to darken the world. And the church of Christ, instead of extending to the utmost bounds of the world, as it did before, shall be reduced to narrow limits again.[61]

In the midst of this great tribulation "Christ will appear in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, coming in the clouds of heaven." This coming will be unexpected by the wicked; for them "it will come as a cry at midnight: they shall be taken in the midst of their wickedness, and it will give them a dreadful alarm. It will at once break upon their revels, their eating, and drinking, and carousing."[62]

In numerous sermons and miscellaneous notes Edwards dispatches his imagination in search of terms by which the magnificence of this scene can be depicted.

> We can now conceive but little of the holy and awful magnificence in which Christ will appear, as he shall come in the clouds of heaven, or of the glory of his retinue. How mean and despicable, in comparison with it, is the most splendid appearance that earthly princes can make! A glorious visible light will shine round about him, and the earth, with all nature, will tremble at his presence. How vast and innumerable will that host be which will appear with him! Heaven will be for the time deserted of its inhabitants.[63]

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[61] Ibid., I, 495.

[62] Ibid., I, 498.

[63] "The Final Judgment," Works, IV, 210f.

But the stage will nonetheless be the earth, and the eyes with which we behold the drama will be eyes of flesh; and the Christ who appears will come with his human nature intact. "Christ will thus descend into our air, to such a distance from the surface of the earth, that every one, when all shall be gathered together, shall see him."[64]

Then in the midst of this spectable "the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and the ~~living~~ changed."[65] The graves will be emptied, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead. The souls which until this time have been in heaven will descend with Christ, and those which have been in hell will ascend to earth, and all will be restored to their bodies. Even those bodies which were scattered by fire, and those which were eaten by beasts or fishes, will be united with their souls. Through all of this the wicked will be trying vainly to escape or to hide; they will "cry to the mountains to fall on them."[66] But the saints will mount up greatly in joy, for they will perceive how their redemption is becoming increasingly complete: for now, rejoined to their bodies, they are redeemed in <u>both</u> soul and body; for now for the first time the <u>whole</u> church of Christ is brought visibly together in one place.[67]

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[64] <u>Ibid</u>., IV, 211.

[65] "History of Redemption," <u>Works</u>, I, 499.

[66] "The Final Judgment," <u>Works</u>, IV, 212f.

[67] "History of Redemption," <u>Works</u>, I, 500f.

Edwards makes much of the humanness of Christ in this affair. In the first place, it gives a certain credibility to the judgment, because of Christ's being "himself a man, one of the same race, having the same faculties, senses and organs, living in the same world under the same law, and in the midst of the same temptations."[68] But more important is the fact that since our conduct in life was based on our view of Christ's humanness, there is no other view of him now which can make it clearer whether our conduct be true or false. The very Christ for or against whom we acted in our lives, is the Christ who now acts for or against us. Now everything shall be made even, especially for those who reviled Christ and spit in his face.

> Then Christ was before their judgment seat; but now it is their turn. They shall stand before his judgment seat with inconceivable horror and amazement, with ghastly countenances, and quaking limbs, and chattering teeth, and knees smiting one against another.[69]

When all are finally gathered before Christ, the wicked at his left hand and standing on the ground, and the righteous suspended in the air halfway between the right hand of Christ and the earth,[70] the judgment proper can begin. First, Christ will turn to his right, and to the church he will announce: "Come, ye blessed of my

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[68]"Observations on Passages of Scripture," Works, III, 552.

[69]"History of Redemption," Works, I, 502.

[70]"The Final Judgment," Works, IV, 212.

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then, turning in the other direction he shall cry out, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The saints will be overwhelmed with joy by their sentence, but "every syllable of it will be more terrible than a stream of lightning" through the hearts of the wicked.[71]

In a sermon that deserves a greater part of the fame accorded Edwards' imprecatory preaching than "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is one whose title leaves little doubt as to its contents: "The End of the Wicked Contemplated by the Righteous: or the Torments of the Wicked in Hell, No Occasion of Grief to the Saints in Heaven." This is a direct appeal to those still in dead frames that if they can expect no mercy from Christ, they will get none from their fellow men either.

> How will you bear to see your parents, who in this life had so dear an affection for you, now without any love to you, approving the sentence of condemnation, when Christ shall with indignation bid you depart, wretched, cursed creatures, into eternal burning? How will you bear to see and hear them praising the Judge, for his justice exercised in pronouncing this sentence, and hearing it with holy joy in their countenances, and shouting forth the praises and hallelujahs of God and Christ on that account?[72]

In one of the miscellaneous notes Edwards puts this all into a vivid metaphor. He speaks of Christ as a Roman

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[71]"History of Redemption," Works, I, 503.

[72]Works, IV, 296.

general returning victorious from combat and bringing with him the captured army with its princes, kings, and generals. The prisoners are surrounded by "mimicks and buffoons" who insult them for their misfortunes. Then the prisoners are taken to public games where they are further humiliated to the great delight of the whole populace. Finally they are returned to prison where Christ strangles them.[73]

D. Radical This-Worldliness

To the sensibilities of the modern man this rather large collection of writings on the details of the end of history and the last judgment would seem to plunge one end of Edwards' christology into a ludicrous otherworldliness. It is therefofe tempting to the student of Edwards to bracket out the obviously naive excesses of these pages, in the interest of rendering the whole more attractive to the contemporary discussion. But this can be done only with great care since it must be recognised in the end that this material is not merely a casual addendum to the other things Edwards has said about Christ. We have seen repeatedly that Edwards cannot conceive of any saving relation with Christ that does not result in actual and visible forms of life in the world. And for that reason, any attempt to account for the saint's

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[73]Miller (ed.), Images or Shadows, No. 81.

relation with Christ in terms that are merely psychological or anthropological or metaphysical will not be able to contain the full scope of Edwards' own thought on that subject, for he never provides any means by which we can closet ourselves with the private experience of the gracious soul without simultaneously examining its relations with the world. Therefore, a history of actual redemption--whether it be of the lives of particular saints such as Phoebe Bartlet and Abigail Hutchinson,[74] or in the collective experience of all men of all ages--is not an optional but a necessary conclusion to Edwards' christology.

Even when we go beyond the end of history and the final judgment, the experiences of the damned and the saved are still conceived in historical terms. Edwards stoutly denies that the punishment of sin can be completed by the annihilation of the sinner after the judgment,[75] for annihilation is no punishment at all.[76] That which was undertaken by the wicked in their historical lives will be repaid in historical terms. And from this punishment will no man escape. Hell "is a strong prison: it is beyond any finite power, or the united strength of all wicked men and devils to unlock, or break open the door of

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[74]Cf., "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," Works, III, 260ff.

[75]"The Eternity of Hell Torments," Works, IV, 267f.

[76]Ibid., IV, 269ff.

that prison. Christ hath the key of hell; he shuts and no man opens."[77] But Christ will save no one in hell, for those who have been sent there are those who have already rejected Christ; and there is no other satisfaction available to them.[78] So, unable to escape, and unable to relieve their anguish,the suffering of the wicked will go on and on, and on.

> Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be, when you are under these wracking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope. . . . when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it. . . . when after you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without any rest day or night.[79]

For the saints, too, their eternal experiences and habitation are described in vividly historical terms. The most important single feature of heaven for the saint is the physical presence of Christ. Both the saints and Christ will be present to each other in body and soul, and they will see each other according to both.[80] In the sermon Edwards preached at Brainerd's funeral he spoke at length of the communion between saint and Lord in

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[77]"The Future Punishment of the Wicked Unavoidable and Intolerable," Works, IV, 259.

[78]"Concerning the Endless Punishment of Those Who Die Impenitent," Works, I, 623f.

[79]"The Eternity of Hell Torments," Works, IV, 278.

[80]Cf., "The Wisdom of God, Displayed in the Way of Salvation," Works, IV, 155f.

heaven. Those who look for some sort of mysticism in Edwards might expect to find it here but there is none. There is no return of the spark into the eternal flame, no return of the imperfectly finite into the perfect and eternal source.

> The most intimate intercourse becomes that relation that the saints stand in to Jesus Christ; and especially becomes that most perfect and glorious union they shall be brought into with him in heaven. They are not merely Christ's servants, but his friends.[81]

However perfect that union is , nothing is lost from the integrity of the humanity either in Christ or in the saints. It is rather that the same humanity which they possessed on earth is excited to a more complete expression of its nature. There are great affections exercised in heaven, and great knowledge, for the elect

> see every thing in Christ that tends to kindle and inflame love, and every thing that tends to gratify love, and every thing that tends to satisfy them: and that in the most clear and glorious manner, without any darkness or delusion, without any impediment or interruption.[82]

In the vital union which the saints enjoy with Christ in heaven, they live by his life and share in his power and glory; they are

> exalted to reign with him. They are through him made kings and priests, and reign with him, and in him, over the same kingdom. As the Father hath appointed unto him a kingdom, so he has appointed to them. The Father has appointed the Son to reign over his kingdom, and the Son appoints his saints to reign in his.[83]

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[81]"Saints When Absent from the Body," Works,III, 629.

[82]Ibid., III, 627f.

[83]Ibid., III, 631.

It would be incorrect to conclude that Edwards' christology, viewed from this perspective, reduces to ludicrous other-worldliness. It would be more accurate to say that it is a ludicrous this-worldliness, for it is but an extension of the present circumstances of the human experience on into eternity. Instead of talking about the Christ whose presence marks the point where eternity breaks into time, Edwards' talk about Christ brings us to see the eternity of God surrender to the finite dimensions of history. But why, we must ask in conclusion, is this ludicrous? Is there any way of "demythologizing" Edwards? Is there any way of getting behind the modern revulsion to his language in order that his doctrine and preaching of Christ might demonstrate the force in our day it possessed in his?

If we may take as a clue to our final evaluation of Jonathan Edwards' christology Rudolf Bultmann's famous remark that,"Der Mythos objektiviert das Jenseitige zum Diesseitigen,"[84] we might ask what that line is which marks the "this-worldly" off from the "other-worldly" both for Edwards and for the modern reader. Edwards did not think he was writing mythology; he thought his was an objective account of actual events because he shared two common beliefs with his listeners and readers. The first was unexamined: "intelligent beings of the world are ever-

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[84] Jesus Christ and Mythology (London: SCM Press, 1958), p. 19.

lasting and will remain after the world comes to an end."[85] Edwards never bothered to defend this notion because it was rarely drawn into question by those with whom he labored. But the other belief was selected with more care. This was his rather firm conviction that the moral life is universally regulated by the sense of "desert." He always knew he could count on his listeners' implicit assumption that for each of their actions there would be a fitting and just reward. Thus we find him repeatedly emphasizing how great an offense to God is sin, and how just therefore is that eternal punishment which man will surely receive for it. And, as we saw in the discussion of the nature of righteousness in Edwards' thought, it is precisely in the context of the talk about just deserts that talk about the satisfaction of Christ has its greatest affectional appeal.

If therefore we read the sermons that deal with the drama of man's final redemption and damnation with an awareness that the common beliefs in immortality and just deserts give them their distinctive shape, then what we find is an intense focus on present action, an urgent summons to those within his hearing that they change their immediate conduct. And there is no time to waste, for death will come quickly and unannounced. Since a man's life is judged for its fruitfulness in the present life, and not in the next, every truth must be seized upon while

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[85]Townsend, No. 547.

there is still breath, every good thing must be sought after while there is still strength. There is nothing that may be let go,for after death there issnothing that may be added or taken away from life. Edwards' sermon for Brainerd took for its doctrine the proposition that "the souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ."[86] Never was Edwards more specific on the precise movements of the saints after death, an account that can be read as an expression of all that is most absurd in his conception of the afterlife. But if we read this against the obvious grief Edwards suffered in this loss, and against the concepts of immortality and the sure reward of virtue, then this sermon should be read as a stirring "Hurrah for David Brainerd!"

We We have said that it is incorrect to regard Edwards' uninterrupted history of actual redemption as an exercise in ludicrous other-worldliness; and that it is more likely an absurd this-worldliness. But now, if this brief attempt to repristinate the logic behind the original force of Edwards' preaching has been successful, we should have won the right to make this conclusion: In the final analysis Edwards' christology must be told as a history; a history whose telling should result not in the immense accumulation of lifeless facts about the world and its inhabitants, but in the call to a visibly active life of radical this-worldliness.

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[86]"Saints When Absent from the Body," Works, III, 625.

This is the inevitable outcome of Edwards' insistence that one cannot speak properly of Christ without speaking of the visibility of those who are one with him. This, as we have seen, is a theme which comes from the very heart of Puritanism. There is nothing new in the theme itself, but organizing an entire theology around it is unique with Edwards. In this sense he had already done what he promised the Princeton Trustees: write a theology in an "entire new method."

E. Conclusion

If this study has been to any degree balanced in its survey and evaluation of Edwards' christology, then the terms on which it is bo be accepted or rejected should be reasonably clear. It can, of course, be denied that the meeting between Christ and sinner must be within the context of man's moral action. One might opt instead for an invisible and contemplative union with Christ, a relation that can be successfully consummated in one's own private reflection. However, if he does he must deal with the argument that when the language and the doctrine about Christ become sundered from visible behavior, their meaning evaporates into insignificance.

On the other hand, to approve of Edwards' christology, and to espouse it for its usefulness in the contemporary discussion, is to put upon oneself not only the

task of finding among the conventional truths of modern man those conceptual structures capable of exciting him to a life of radical this-worldliness, but also the obligation to take up such a life himself. There is a danger in trying to embrace Edwards behind the scholar's desk, luxuriating in the intellectual opulence of the great Puritan divine, for in these several thousand pages the glistening knife of his mind cut too often and too deeply through the pious confidence in the permanence of life to allow us easily to persist in our languor. For how can those of us who heard the news out of Dallas in the November of 1963 remain undisturbed when we read the news out of Enfield in the July of 1743 that "the arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight cannot discern them"?[87]

But then Edwards himself can teach us that to look into the terrifying pit of hell will only cause the heart to recoil with dread, and to find even life emptied of its meaning. The theologian must dare to stand against the background of his historical relativity and, defying the triumph of death over life, he must attempt so to present Christ that the heart will be moved to a new vigor and zest for worldly action. For him who chooses to do this according to Edwards' lights there are at least three principles which must inform his work.

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[87]"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Faust and Johnson, op. cit., p. 159.

1. Invisible piety is destructive of faith. While Edwards ceaselessly reminded us that man's heart must be appealed to in matters of faith and ethics, he was also drawing our attention to the danger of an enthusiasm which either pulled the person in upon himself to dwell in the sweetness of his own affections, or set him upon the world in patterns of action that had little relevance to the realities of human society. Edwards was deeply concerned about that universal tendency of religion to turn a man in upon himself. A man has no more knowledge or understanding of God than can be seen in him by others. If this is denied, the knowledge of God and of divine things either is without any clear meaning, or it is the possession of professional theologians who need do nothing with it but speak it to one another occasionally.

2. The heart will follow the understanding. Edwards' rigorously taught doctrine that the will is as the most apparent good is, places upon the theologian an extremely difficult task. Whereas the student of the church's thought is easily inclined toward isolating a body of doctrine from the world so that he can the better examine its inner systematic consistencies, it ought to be examined according to its ability to appeal to the understanding of the unsaved. But we have not properly comprehended how theology is to appeal to the understanding,

if we assume that making it simple, or making it totally contemporary will have satisfied this requirement. Edwards is saying that we must appeal to the understanding, not for the purpose of intellectual enlightenment, but for the purpose of bringing the church to a particular style of acting in the world. It must become the task of the theologians to deal with the actual reasons people have for acting as they do. They must deal, in other words, with what is <u>real</u> in the relationship between man and the world.

Therefore, that Christian who would make the faith relevant and compelling must focus his attentions in two directions at once. In the first place, he must be sensitive to what reasons people already have for acting as they do; and, in the second place, he must determine how another reason can be introduced. He must be a keen observer and listener. He must be thoroughly immersed in the world. He must be willing to begin against an historical background as indistinct and shifting as that which lay behind the young preacher who rose in 1731 to deliver the Boston Lecture. Like that young preacher, he must seize upon those popular conceptions of the common mind (for Edwards they were <u>immortality</u> and <u>just deserts</u>) to deliver into their understanding a powerful motive to act. What those contemporary conventions are we need not speculate here; but that they must be employed seems necessary to say.

3. Jesus Christ must be the most apparent good. This is the principle that stands above all else that Edwards has done in his theology. When the Christian has succeeded in summoning his listeners to action in the world, and has done so according to that which affects the understanding, it is still necessary to say that what must affect the understanding is nothing other than Jesus Christ. It must be said that only he is a Christian who so lives in the world that Christ is his reason for acting.

But how do we know that it is truly Christ who is our most apparent good? One traditional way of dealing with this question was to refer it to scripture as it is understood in terms of timeless orthodox categories. Another traditional method was to look not outward, but inward, in order to see if the response of the soul fits the required pattern. Edwards rejected both of these; not so much because he had either of them standing in his way, but because he proposed a third. We cannot look merely at scripture (the devils can do this), nor can we look at the naked soul (for we should see there whatever we wish to see), but we can look at each other. We can determine as a group, as a community of people, whether one or another member is truly motivated by Christ.

It is, therefore, with the gathered church that Edwards leaves the final authority in this matter. It is their office not only to determine who among them gives evidence that Christ dwells livingly within, but

also to manifest Christ to the world. The world will see no other Christ but that one who appears in the church's action, or lack of it, in the world. That does not mean, of course, that the theologian cannot determine from the reading of scripture and doctrine that the church is manifesting the wrong Christ. There is nothing that will keep him from attempting to persuade the church that its most apparent good is not the Christ of scripture. But if he is not persuasive, he has no higher appeal.

It is in this light that Edwards himself must be judged a failure. At the most crucial moment in his pastoral career, he stood against his church because he thought they were taking their eyes from the Christ of scripture. But he failed to convince them. He failed to make the Christ who was his most apparent good, their most apparent good. Whatever we might want to say of the brilliance and the constancy of Edwards' own faith through this crsis, his own theological insights compel us to regard it as fruitless and therefore insignificant. For this reason, Edwards' greatest failure might be taken as the best illustration of the nature of his christology.

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